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**Editor : A.C. SUKLA**

B-1, Sambalpur University, Jyoti Vihar, Orissa

Phone : +0663+430314, Fax :0663+431915

E.mail:anantasukla@hotmail.com

**Editorial Advisor**

**Milton H. Snoeyenbos**

Department of Philosophy

Georgia State University

Atlanta : Georgia 30303, U.S.A.

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# JOURNAL OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE AND AESTHETICS

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# The Ancient Theory of Imitation (*Mimesis*)

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GÖRAN SÖRBOM

## Not an art theory but a theory of pictorial representation

One important goal of theories of art is to distinguish between art and non-art. An art theory, sometimes condensed into a definition of art, should help us to understand what art is, how it works, and how it differs from other human activities and artifacts. In most handbooks it is maintained that the theory of imitation (*mimesis*) is one of the major art theories in the sense just given and that it is also the oldest one of which we know.

The theory of imitation as we find it in ancient texts is not, however, a theory of art; it is a theory of pictorial representation. The ancient theory of imitation was never used to distinguish between fine arts and their products and other human skills and artifacts. The basic distinction for the ancient theory of imitation was that between pictures and real things. For example, a house is a real thing which you can use in many different ways, but a painting representing a house is an imitation which you cannot use as a house even if it looks like a house. You can do nothing with it other than look at it in its capacity as a picture. As Plato maintains in *The Sophist*, the imitation is a sort of "man-made dream produced for those who are awake" (266 C).

We do not find the idea that the basic and distinguishing characteristic of works of art is that they are imitations until the 18th century, such as in the works of Jean Baptiste Dubos and Charles Batteux. This idea was, however, rejected by most critics during the 18th century and since then has been ridiculed as inadequate and superficial.

### Forms of mental image (aisthesis)

When Alexander Baumgarten suggested for the first time that aesthetics was an intellectual pursuit (*Meditationes philosophicae de nonnullis ad poema pertinentibus* (1735), § 116), he started from the basic distinction, originally made by the Greek philosophers and the Church fathers, between *aistheta* and *noeta*, i.e., between what we receive from our senses and what we think. Aesthetics should be concerned with sensuous knowledge as logic is concerned with thought.

*Aisthesis* was described in the ancient tradition as the process in which mental images of the contingent qualities of individual things are presented to the mind. When we see a house, for instance, there is a mental image of the house in the mind of the perceiver, an image of its colours and shapes. The basic metaphor used to characterize this process was that of pressure. An individual thing presses its contingent qualities upon the senses like a signet ring which, when stamped into wax, delivers its form but not its matter to the wax. The class of mental images was divided into several subclasses that were distinguished from each other with regard to vividness, consistency, and relation to the outside world. Traditionally, six different mental occurrences were regarded as mental images of individual things. (*Correct*) perceptions of things in the world are true to the things perceived and are also vivid and consistent. I can have a correct mental image of a house, and this mental image is vivid and consistent with the rest of my situation. But we also know that the images we have of the world can be distorted; we then call such images *illusions* in order to distinguish them from, for instance, (*correct*) perceptions. Sometimes we have *hallucinations* which may be described as mental images caused by fever, drugs, etc., with no relation, neither true nor distorted, to objects in the outside world. Their vividness and consistency may vary.

(*Correct*) perceptions, illusions, and hallucinations are received by or generated within the person having them, and this reception has often been seen as a passive process; the wax merely receives the form of the signet ring. But it has been claimed that the sensory apparatus can also be active, i.e., it can by itself present mental images to the mind. *Memories* are one type of such images. When we remember something we have a mental image of that something, and we know that the mental image does not now answer to something in the world, but that it has done so. *Dreams* are another kind of mental image generated by the mind or the sensory apparatus. Dreams are sometimes very lively but seldom consistent, and a dream has no correct relation to the outside world in the sense of being an image of a particular external and existing object. Occasionally, elements in the dream can refer to particular existing things, but that is not characteristic of them. Dreams are, instead, characterized by their ability to freely combine previously experienced material. Finally, *imaginations* are a kind of mental image. When we imagine something we know that the mental images created by the senses do not answer to something in the outside world. The mind is free to compose mental images of any kind whatsoever, the only restriction being that the composite elements must be previously known to the person imagining. Like memories, but unlike "passive mental images," imaginings can be generated by will, at least to some degree.

### **The apprehension of imitations as a form of aisthesis**

When Plato calls imitations "man-made dreams produced for those who are awake," he singles out the apprehension of pictures as yet another distinct kind of mental image. Looking at or listening to an imitation resembles but is not a dream because the spectator is awake. This fact implies that the viewer or listener is aware that it is an imitation and not a real thing which he or she is apprehending. If a person looks at a painting representing a house and believes he is looking at a real house, he makes a perceptual mistake; he has an illusion. Thus, it is necessary to know when you apprehend an imitation correctly that it is an imitation and not a real thing, and also to know how to act in accordance with the knowledge that it is an imitation and not a real thing.

The possibility of perceptual mistakes when looking at or listening to imitations was of great concern to Plato. When in the *Sophist* (268 B.C.) he characterizes sophists as imitators, he sees the sophists as having an outward behaviour similar to that of wise men. In reality, however, they are not wise; they just appear to be wise, and that is all they intend. Plato seems to fear that most people are tricked by such illusions, and he did not believe ordinary men to be capable of guarding themselves against such mistakes. He recommends that the higher guardians of the ideal city acquire a true knowledge of the nature of imitations as an antidote against such perceptual mistakes (*Republic* 595B). Plato seems, however, to have overestimated the danger of perceptual mistakes in connection with imitations. Most people know the difference between imitations and "real things" and act accordingly. The real danger, as Plato also saw, is the moral influence exerted on human behaviour by imitations.

The apprehension of imitations is dreamlike in character in the sense that the mental image produced by the imitation can be a free combination having no reference to real existing things. In making pictures the makers are as free as dreamers to combine elements into objects that have no reference to the outside world, the centaur being the standard example of this. Horace adds that the combination must also show *decorum*, i.e., follow what is proper (*Ars poetica* 1-37).

Another difference between dreams and mental images called forth by imitations concerns how they are generated. Dreams are generated spontaneously in the mind of the dreamer, but the apprehension of imitations is triggered by external man-made objects. The fact that pictures and imitations are man-made also distinguishes them from 'natural' images such as reflections and shadows, which are made by God or nature (*Sophist* 265B-266D).

### **Some basic properties of imitations according to ancient thought**

Plato writes in *The Sophist* (240 A-B) that a picture (*eidolon*) is similar to things of the kind it represents, that it is similar in only certain respects, and that it is no more

than similar in respect to the things in question. Similarity is in ancient thought understood as having properties in common and the idea that individual things and mental images can have properties in common was founded in the belief that perception basically is a kind of impression, a process in which individual objects deliver their shapes but not their matter to the mind. Thus, the mental image as a kind of individual impression is similar to the external individual object it represents by having properties in common with it within the range of the capacity of the relevant sense organ. Imitations and pictures are things seen or heard, and the properties they can share with the things they represent must therefore be capable of being seen or heard.

Furthermore, a picture or an imitation cannot share all of the properties of the thing represented. If something shares all of the properties of something else, it is not a picture or imitation of that thing but a second example of it (*Cratylus* 432 A-B). The fact that an imitation is only partially similar to the thing it represents, a house for instance, may help the viewer classify the thing he is apprehending as an imitation and not a real thing.

Finally, the only function of a picture and an imitation is to be similar to a certain extent to the thing represented. (*Sophist* 240 B). Pictures and imitations are made in order to be seen or heard and thereby produce mental images of things they are only similar to in certain respects. They are dreams (an imaginative kind of mental image) man-made for those who are awake, i.e., who know they are not what they represent. For example, when Aristotele writes that a tragedy is an imitation, this meant to the ancient reader that the tragedy was characterized as an image, not a real thing, i.e. the tragedy was seen as something man-made with the sole purpose of creating mental images (perceptions) in the mind of the perceiver, images which the perceiver knows do not represent or answer to real things. The spectator sees Oidipus acting but he and she know that it is not the real Oidipus but an actor.

### **Kinds of imitation**

The important thing when discussing imitations is, however, not the imitation as an external thing and its similarities to other external objects but the mental image it triggers, i.e., the fact that the spectator sees or hears an individual object which he or she knows is not a real thing. This man-made dream produced for those who are awake can be triggered by a number of different kinds of things. Aristotle (*Poetics*, ch. 1) distinguishes between kinds of imitations with reference to the medium used, such as words, gestures, shapes, colours, etc. The external imitation object does not necessarily physically resemble the things it represents but rather results in a mental image representing something



individual. The recited words of Homer's *Iliad*, for instance, do not resemble the wrath of Achilles but call forth mental images of that story in the minds of the listeners.

Both Plato and Aristotle maintain that music is imitative in character. For example, Aristotle states in *The Politics* (1340a17-19) that "musical times and tunes provide us with images of states of character." It makes sense to claim within the outline of the theory of imitation sketched here that music is a form of imitation. When we say "this piece of music is sad," this means in terms of the theory of imitation given here that I hear sadness or an expression of sadness in the piece of music in the same way as I see a house in the painting. The sounds I hear are similar to expressions of sadness I have met with before in music or in "real" life, and I know that the thing I hear is merely similar to real expressions of sadness, and that the only function of the piece of music is to show us this representation of sadness. The result is a mental image of sadness, and we can be affected by the mood of the mental image by this showing of an individual and characteristic expression of sadness.

Knowing that it is not a real expression of sadness makes us react differently when listening to the piece of music than to real expressions of sadness. The same is true about looking at pictures. Knowing that the thing represented in a painting is just a representation and not a real thing makes us react differently. Aristotle writes in *De anima* (427b23-25) that "[a]gain, when we form an opinion that something is threatening or frightening, we are immediately affected by it, and the same is true of our opinion that inspires courage; but in imagination we are like spectators looking at something dreadful or encouraging in a picture." And in the *Poetics* (1448b10-12) he notes that, "[o]bjects which in themselves we view with pain, we delight to contemplate when reproduced with minute fidelity: such as the forms of the most ignoble animals and dead bodies."

In a hilariously funny scene in the play *Thesmophoriazusai* (133-174) Aristophanes seems to ridicule an idea, now lost, which might have been some kind of ancient theory of expression. The poet Agathon appears in woman's clothing because he is writing a female role and he claims, "For as the Worker, so the Work will be." One of the characters of the play replies,

Then that is why harsh Philocles writes harshly  
And that is why vile Xenocles writes vilely  
And cold Theognis writes such frigid plays.

### Making imitations

Xenophon relates an anecdote in his *Symposium* (IV.21) about a person who was teased because he never had anything else in mind but his lover. He replies: "Do you not know that I have so clear an image (*eidolon*) of him in my heart that had I the ability as

a sculptor or a painter I could produce a likeness of him from this image that would be quite as close as if he were sitting for me in person.” And Philostratus in *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (II.22) maintains that imitations are due to a mimetic faculty which is twofold, namely, the ability to form mental images and the technical skill to convey these mental images into matter. “Man owes his mimetic faculty to nature, but his power of painting to art [skill].” When we see images in the stars, in shadows, and in reflections, the mimetic faculty is activated. Also, looking at paintings and sculptures is dependent on the mimetic faculty: “[T]hose who look at works of painting and drawing require a mimetic faculty; for no one could appreciate or admire a picture of a horse or a bull, unless he had formed an idea of the creature represented.”

It is often maintained that the theory of imitation is concerned with the relation between the imitation and the outside world, i.e., between the picture and the model or models in the outside world. What is the model of an imitation or, which is the same thing, what is represented in the imitation? It can be an individual thing or person, and Xenophon relates in his *Memorabilia* (III.11) how painters use beautiful women as models. But it can also be a memory image, as Xenophon observes in his *Symposium* (IV.21). Porphyry in *On the Life of Plotinus and the Order of his Books* (1) also describes how a portrait was made in secret of the philosopher Plotinus by a painter who went several times to Plotinus’ lectures and used the composite memory image he thereby created as the model for the painting.

Xenophon in *Memorabilia* (III.10) and others stress the possibility of choosing elements and putting them together in such a way that the final result will exceed what we normally find in this world. Pliny in *Natural History* (XXXV.64) writes how the painter Zeuxis who, when commissioned to make a painting of a goddess, “made an inspection of the virgins of the city, who were nude, and selected five in order that he might represent in the picture that which was most laudible feature of each.” Cicero in *De inventione* (II.1.13) comments that Zeuxis used this technique “[f]or he did not believe that it was possible to find in one body all the things he looked for in beauty, since nature has not refined to perfection any single object in all its parts.”

Maximus of Tyre in his 17th *Oration* (3.18) writes that, “[i]n reality you would never find a body precisely like a statue, since the arts aim at the greatest beauty.” He thus rules out the use of an individual external object as a model; the imitation and picture is not a slavish copy of an external object, something the theory of imitation is often said to imply. But what directs the painter or sculptor in choosing the elements and according to what pattern are pictures put together? Greek authors and philosophers have stressed since classical times that crucial to the production of paintings and sculptures are the

mental images which have been produced in the mind of the painter or sculptor: "[I]t doesn't matter whether he had his model without, to fix his eyes on, or within, a notion conceived and built up in his own brain" (Seneca, *Epistulae morales* 65). Imagination creates mental images of particular things with their sensuous qualities, colours, and shapes, and the production of imitations and pictures is characterized by the same freedom of combination as dreams and imaginations. In (correct) perception the object presses its form without its matter upon the mind of the perceiver. In a way, the production of pictures is the reverse order of (correct) perception: the skilled hands of the painter or sculptor model the matter to coincide with the mental image. Every craftsman "carries the model in himself and conveys its form into matter" (Alcinous, *Isagoga* IX), "keeping his eyes upon the pattern and making the visible and tangible objects correspond in each case to the incorporeal ideas" (Philo, *De opificio mundi* 4).

Finally, authors such as Cicero (*Orator* II.8-10) and Seneca (*Epistulae morales* 65) have claimed that Platonic ideas may serve as models for pictures and imitations. Plato himself denies this vehemently in the *Republic* (598A). Although Platonic ideas cannot be grasped by the senses, the conviction that pictures can represent Platonic ideas has appeared now and then in the history of the theory of imitation in order to enhance the value of pictures. The reason for this is the fact that the abstract intellectual world is regarded even today as much more valuable than the fleeting and ever-changing world of the senses, which is the domain of imitations.

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Chairman

Institute of Aesthetics

University of Uppsala

Uppsala, Sweden

# The Courtly Lover: Java and the West

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PATRIC MICHAEL THOMAS

Love is a universal, even if its manifestations are culturally diverse. These differences notwithstanding, our studies on the medieval literatures of India, China, Georgia and Persia<sup>11</sup> have demonstrated that the courtly lover is not limited to the West. To be sure, there are differences, and these have been noted in the aforementioned studies. Be that as it may, it is no less remarkable that in the far-flung culture of Java one should find a courtly avatar in the personage of Pañji, whom Christian Hooykas calls the "eternal lover" (Hooykas 10.)<sup>12</sup> In actuality, the Javanese hero is the central character of a so-called "Pañji cycle." Note, however, that S.O. Robson rejects the idea of "cycle" because

... that would imply a series of  
stories, each one complete,  
but at the same time linking  
up with the next (Robson 12).

Rather than cycle, it would seem to be more accurate to speak of many Pañji stories, more or less related,<sup>13</sup> a "Matière de Pañji", as it were. The central elements of the story are :

- 1) The setting of the story is Java
- 2) Two kingdoms : Kuripan and Daha
- 3) The prince of Kuripan is betrothed to the princess of Daha
- a) Before they marry, a complicating factor (or a combination of factors) intervenes.
- 4) The problem is resolved by the Prince, who disguises himself and uses an alias.
- 5) He reveals himself and claims the princess
- 6) With their marriage, the world returns to its former settled state.<sup>14</sup> (Robson 12)

As one might imagine, this "Matière de Pañji" was quite popular, judging at least from the number of manuscripts containing the romance. Nonetheless, there have been little or no scholarly efforts exerted in that direction (Zoetmulder 427). Indeed, a similar observation has been made with regard to Javanese literature in general. Although it spans more than a thousand years in

hundreds of different works,

... unhappily its study is still at an elementary stage. Comparatively few works have been critically edited or translated (Robson 1).

This is truly unfortunate, given the current emphasis on interdisciplinary studies. One is therefore grateful to S.O. Robson for his English translation and critical edition of one Pañji story, namely, the *Wangbang Wideya*.<sup>(5)</sup> We will be using this work<sup>(6)</sup> for our comparative study with medieval occidental erotic traditions. Before proceeding, one should observe that this Javanese romance was written in Middle Javanese<sup>(7)</sup> in the *Kidung*<sup>(8)</sup> style using the *tengahan* metrical system.<sup>(9)</sup>

*Wangbang Wideya*<sup>(10)</sup> is literature of the court. The Pañji story is about royalty in royal courts. It reflects the preoccupations of the court (Robson 11). This world represents an inner world of refinement, one we have found elsewhere in Provence (Mancini 62), in the Chinese courts of the Southern Dynasties (Birrell, "Decorum", 120), in the court of Bengal (Varma 93), in the Georgian court (Dronke 17), and in the Persian court of the 14<sup>th</sup> century (Meisami, "Unity", 116). What makes this court literature "courtly" is its religious or metaphysical pretensions.<sup>(11)</sup> Love is treated as an absolute. Human love becomes apotheosized, and the human lovers are raised to a much higher level. One has only to observe how often Pañji, the prince of Kuripan, and the Princess of Daha are depicted in terms of Smara and Ratih, the god and goddess of love (Robson 242, 245).<sup>(12)</sup> For example, one notes the reactions of the servants.<sup>(13)</sup>

The servants saw how Apañji Wireswara formed a perfect pair with the princess, and said, "They are like Smara and Ratih!" (p.89)

Several times, Pañji is said to have the appearance of Smara: 3, § 47b, p. 177; 3, § 69a, p. 187; 3, § 69b, p. 187; 3, § 70a, p. 187; 3, § 148a, p. 233; 3, § 150b, p. 223. Nor is Smara the only god that Pañji resembles. Sometimes he is compared to the incarnated Parameswaratmaka<sup>(14)</sup> come down to earth: 2, § 11b, p. 119; 2 § 52a, p. 141; 2, § 29b, p. 169. At other times, he is said to be Atanu<sup>(15)</sup> in human form (3, § 19b, p. 165) or the incarnation of the god Pasupati<sup>(16)</sup> in taking away the impurities of the world (2, § 22b, p. 125). In battle his glory shines brightly like the thousand-rayed sun (2, § 22b, p. 125). This last simile recalls the hero of *The Knight of the Panther Suit* (*Vepkhistsgaosani*) of Shota Rustaveli, a Georgian poet of the twelfth century (Bowra 46). It is very striking how the lovers in this romance are batched in solar imagery, and not only the main pair, Tariel and Nestan-Darejan, but also the secondary pair, Avtandil and Tinatin (Thomas, "Chiaroscuro", 9). When Tariel first appears in *The Knight* .....

"He is like the sun, too dazzling  
to look on —..." (Vivian 45-46).<sup>(17)</sup>

When some hunters from Khataeti describe Tariel to Avtandil :

"If the sun were to put on

human form, he might dazzle  
us with just such a brilliant  
presence.” (Vivian 57).

When Avtandil meets Tariel :

“You are the image of the one  
sun, the source of the light that  
no grief or anguish obscure” (Vivian 66)

In speaking to the vizir, Avtandil portrays Tariel in a similar fashion :

“He is of the nature of the  
sun, so that all who come  
within his orbit take fire  
from him” (Vivian 113)

For all intents and purposes, Tariel is treated like a sun god. And yet, paradoxically, before love these romantic heroes are humble slaves of passion. Pañji's first clandestine communication with the Princess is a poem couched in pitiful words (1, § 101b, p.105). In another letter, he underlines his unhappy state:

I know nevertheless that you could not possibly be concerned — for why should  
you, delightful one, prefer the homage of a miserable wretch. (p.107)

Ken Bayan, a servant of the Princess, remarks how unbelievably low the Prince had placed himself (1, § 106a, p. 106). Later, he goes so far as to call himself her slave (3, § 103b, p.203). Under this aspect, Pañji reminds one of Bernart de Ventadorn,<sup>(18)</sup> whose work is the culmination of troubadour poetry (Cholakin 8).

Et s'a leis platz quem retenha,  
far pot de me so talen,  
melhs no fa l vens de la rama  
qu'enaissi vau leis seguen  
com la folha sec lo ven.

(“Amors, enqueraus preyara,” vv. 29-33)<sup>(19)</sup>

And if it please her to keep me on, she can have her way with me, more than the wind does with the branch...(Nichols 20).

Before his *domna*, Bernart is humility itself :

Tan sui vas la bela doptans,  
per qu'em ren a leis merceyans,  
silh platz, quem don o quem venda !  
 (“Lancan vei per mei la landa,” vv. 26-28).

I am so fearful of her. I surrender myself, a suppliant, to her. If it pleases her, let her give me away or sell me (Nichols 116).

It is contrary to the troubadour tradition for the poet to be apotheosized. On the other hand, it is the lady who is the absolute ruler of the heart and the epitome of perfection:

am la plus bel e la melhor.

("Non es meravelha seu chan," v. 18)

I love the best and the most beautiful lady. (Nichols 134)

car sai c'am e sui amatz

per la gensor qued anc Deus fei.

("Lancan folhan bos e jarric," vv. 21-23)

Because I know that I love and am loved by the most beautiful woman God ever made. (Nichols 108).

Domna, I genser c' anc nasques

e la melher qu'em anc vis

("Gent estera que chantes," vv. 37-38)

Lady, the most beautiful ever born and the best I have ever seen (Nichols 96).

Whereas the Lady of the troubadours is implicitly treated as if she were a goddess, in *Wangbang Wideya* the Princess of Daha, like the Prince of Kuripan, is explicitly described in terms of a deity: "the deity of the 'sugar-shore' in human form" (1, § 67b, p.91), "the splendour of flowers sent down from heaven" (1, § 71b, p. 91), "the deity of flowers in human form" (3, §7b, p. 159), the goddess of the palace<sup>(21)</sup> (1, § 83a, p.97). In trying to persuade the Princess to come with him to Kuripan, Pañji exclaims:

The only comfort now would be to die in the fragrant bedchamber --- I am not afraid of being found out. It would be heaven to die with your charms as means of release, young lady. My treasure, let us go forth from the land of Daha and take refuge in Kuripan, you shall later rule over me. Come, then, let me be recompensed, divine one. (p.177)

Touched by the fiery finger of love, the lover is both elevated and humbled.

There is an element of Fate in such an absolute passion. Raden Warastrasari has a prophetic dream in which Siwa, the Three-Eyed god, tells her :

Well, young princess, that Wangbang Wideya Apañji Wireswara will be your husband; he is my son Ino Makardwaja,<sup>(22)</sup> and his intention in coming here is to try to succeed in marrying you. Oh, do not be too down-hearted, for you will indeed be married--  
- I grant you this favor (p.81).

As to the Prince, he dreams about catching a white turtle dove and putting it in a cage (1,



§11b, p. 65), a dream in Canto 1 that prefigures his successful elopement in Canto 3. In the *Tristan*, fate is embodied by the philter<sup>(24)</sup> which Triustan and Yssolde drink by accident.<sup>(25)</sup> Near death, Tristan makes reference to this *vin herbè*:

Together we drank the drink  
At sea when we were surprised,  
The drink was our death,  
We have never drawn comfort from it,  
At such an hour we were given over  
To death, which we drank.

(My translation)

Love as fate is also indicated in the dying words of Yssolde :

Since I could not come in time  
And since I did not have luck on my side,  
I have come to death.  
Likewise from the drink I have taken comfort.

(My translation)

For Bernart de Ventadorn that first look of love is a fated moment<sup>(26)</sup>

Anc non agui de me poder  
ni no fui meus de l'or' en sai  
Qu'em laisset en sos olhs vezer.  
("Can vei la lauzeta mover," vv. 17-19).

Never have I been in control of myself from the hour she let me gaze into her eyes : ---  
(Nichols 168).

These verses recall Pañji who feels faint and swoons upon seeing the Princess (1, § 63a, p. 87). The remarks of the servants are apropos later on when the lovers are in the same social gathering.

Now the palace servants were whispering about the way Wangbang was also wearing the *Kain* which he had received from Raden Warastrasari as a reward for painting the pattern earlier. They said, "It's clear from their glances that they are mingled and joined together, like honey mixed with sugar" (p. 159).

One remembers the first moment when Tariel, the hero of *Vepkhistaqsani*, beholds Nestan-Darejan :

Asmat drew the curtain aside. As I was standing, facing towards the entrance, my gaze fell upon her who was within. For a moment I looked è and the sight of

her penetrated my heart like a shaft of light and set a fire within me--- The strength went out of my limbs and I fell down in a trance. (Vivian 71-72).

Although love is a source of ecstasy, it can also be a source of woe. Bernart de Ventadorn is caught between life and death because his lady keeps him in suspense :

De ben far se deu penar,  
car sem ten en lon pensar,  
no posc viure ni morir.

("Can la verz folha s'espera," vv. 26-28)

She ought to strive to do rightly (by me), for if she holds me in suspense for long, I can neither live nor die (Nicholas 152) <sup>(27)</sup>

With reason Hāfiz, a Persian poet of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, proclaims the difficulty of the lover's way :

Tariq-e eshq por āshub o fetnesh-ast  
ay del :  
biyoftad ān-keh dar-in rāh bā  
shetāb ravad (QG § 221) <sup>(28)</sup>

The road is full of tumult and trial, O heart: he who goes in haste along this road will stumble (tr. Meisami, "Technique," 8)

So unbearable is Pañji's burden of frustrated passion that at dawn he cannot get out of bed because the pain in his heart could not be soothed <sup>(29)</sup> (3, § 79b, p.193). Insofar as love is as strong as death (*Canticle of Canticles* 8.1), one is not surprised that the courtly lover's emotions are metaphorically connected with death. After seeing the Princess of Daha, Pañji's reactions is ecstatic. Indeed, he seemed to have lost life and soul (1, § 71a, p.91). When the troubadour first looked into his lady's eyes, that moment was for him a kind of death :

Miraihs, pus me mirei en te,  
m'an mort li sospir de preon,  
("Can vei la lauzeta mover," vv. 21-22).

Mirror, since I saw myself reflected in you, deep sighs have been killing me.  
(Nichols 168)

Furthermore, love's desire can be so extreme that the pain of frustrated desire can resemble a kind of death:

Aissim part de leis em recre;  
Mort m'a, e per mort li respon,  
("Can vei la lauzeta mover," vv. 53-54).

I leave her and renounce her. She has slain me and with death I shall answer her. (Nichols 168).

Ai las ! com mor de talen !  
("Tuih cil quem preyon queu chan," v.8)

Alas ! How I die from desire!

Pañji's desire for the Princess is no less strong. After being tormented by the vision of her beauty, Wangbang says that he would prefer to die if he could not have her (1. § 67b, p.90). In one of his letters to her, Pañji writes to his beloved that he will die of longing and the pain of relentless heartache (3. § 45a, p. 176). Such a sentiment could have been expressed by Bernart de Ventadorn. In another letter, Pañji expresses the desire to be joined to the princess in death wrapped in one of her *kair*<sup>301</sup> as a shroud.

The only thing, young lady, that I request of you, divine one, is this: when I am dead  
I ask to be shrouded in a cast-off *kain* of yours (p. 107).

One thinks of that ghazal in which Ḥāfiẓ proclaims :

be go-šāy torbat-am-rā ba'd az  
va-fāt-am o be-negār  
ke-z ātaš-e daron-am dud az kafan  
bar-āyad (QG § 233.2).

Open my grave after my death and look: because of my eternal fire (of love) there comes smoke out of my shroud (tr. Skalmowski 586) for these poets of obsessive passion, love is unending.

Sometimes Nature, like a verdant mirror, reflect the poet's mood, be it happy or sad. Bernart de Ventadorn, for example, becomes one with burgeoning Nature of Spring when he describe his ebullient emotions.

β

Lacan folhon basc e jarric,  
elh flors pareis elh verdura  
pels vergers e pels pratz,  
elh auzel, c'an estat enic,  
son gai desotz los folhatz,  
autresim chant e mesbaudei  
e reflorisc e reverdei  
e folh segon ma natura.

(Lazar, vv. 1-8)

When woods and thickets shoot forth their leaves, and the flowers and greenery appear throughout the gardens and meadows, and the birds, who have been sulking, are gay beneath the

foliage, then I too sing rejoice and blossom. I am renewed and put forth leaves according to my nature (Nichols 108).

In *Wangbang Wideya*, the lush description of the garden Bagenda is an exteriorization of the blossoming passions of the hero. For the lover, everything is love. Pañji sees Nature through the eyes of desire.

The scent of the *syama* flowers pervaded the air like the perfume of a woman's *kain*, parted from her waist, and the ivory bamboo sighed, rustling its leaves.

The fruits of the ivory coconut palm were as desirable as a girl's breasts and the internode of the ivory *petaß* was like her waist, laid bare in the bed-chamber. The *Pudak* flowers in bud were like her calves uncovered, and the *saßga-laßit* creeper was like her hair, loosened and spilling over the pillow, and the white flowers of the *srigadiß* were like her teeth, becoming visible when she is given a betel quid in the bed-chamber.

The lotuses were open, like the eyes of a girl casting amrous glances, and the leaves of the *imba* tree were the like the quivering of her eyebrows in arinoyance. The flowers of the *jamani* were like a girl's golden complexion, and the water-weed was spread on the pond like curls on her forehead swaying when her face is washed, awakening the passion of the one oppressed by desire (p. 103).

On the other hand, Nature can also reflect the lover's sorrow. Although a typical, here is an example of an autumnal poem of Bernart.

Lancan vei la folha  
jos dels arbres chazer,  
cui que pes ni doilha,  
a me deu bo saber.  
No crezatz qu'eu vohla  
flor in folha vezer,  
car me s'orgolha  
so qu'eu plus volh aver.  
(Lazar, vv. 1-8).

It should please *me* to see the leaves fall from the trees, whomever else it may pain or grieve. Do not believe that I am interested in seeing flowers or leaves: the one I want most to have is haughty to me. (Nichols 112)

The autumn mood is more typical of the "Palace Style Poetry" of early medieval China:<sup>(31)</sup>

Ever since you went away,  
me tense face near the porch  
won't soften,

.....

In front of the garden purple  
 orchids<sup>(32)</sup> bloom.  
 Nature withers, sensing the change  
 of season, . . .  
 (Pao Ling-hui, "Poem sent to a traveller," p. 123)  
 Who can long endure separation ?  
 Autumn ends winter is here, once more.  
 (Hsieh T'iao, "Autumn nights," p. 129).

In Wangbang Wideya the lover's sadness is mirrored by nocturnal nature :

That night the light of the moon<sup>(33)</sup> shone brightly as if knowing of the heartache of one afflicted by passionate longing ; the weeping of the *cucur* was like the weeping of someone who has lost his loved one; and the *tadah-arsa* wept pitifully awakening his heartache, oppressed by longing; while the buzzing of the bees wanting the flowers was like the sobbing of a girl overcome on her bed (p. 93).

Clearly the melancholy call of the *cucur* and the *tadah-asi*<sup>(34)</sup> represents the Javanese lover. Just as these birds are said to be so much in love with the moon that they pine away as it wanes,<sup>(35)</sup> so also Pañji languishes out of his desire for the Princess, who in her father's dream is identified with the moon<sup>(36)</sup> (1, § 17a, p. 67). One has remarked on the importance of the nightingale in the versos of Bernart de Ventadorn. In spite of his famous poem on the lark,<sup>(37)</sup> it is the *rossignol* that appears most frequently in his *cansos* of exquisite incandescence (Pfeffer 210). As an example:

Pel doutz chan que'l rossinhol's fai  
 la noih can me sui adormitz,  
 revelh de joi totz esbaitz,  
 d'amor pensius e cossirans; (vv. 1-4)

During the night when I am asleep, I wake with joy at the nightingale's sweet song, all confused, troubles, and pensive in love; (Nichols 139)

For the troubadour, the song of the nightingale is an invitation to love and, without doubt, reifies the poet's predisposition to passion. In the Persian courtly *ghazal* of Hāfiz, the nightingale has a more active role insofar as he symbolizes the lover romancing the rose, the coy but enticing lady:<sup>(38)</sup>

Fekr-e bolbol hamah ān-ast keh  
 goi shod gārash ;  
 goi dar andisheh keh chon'eshveh  
 konad dar kārash (QG 277)

The nightingale thinks only that the rose become his love; the rose thinks only of when she should be coy. (tr. Meisami, "Technique," 21)

A part of Nature, the poet uses Nature to mirror the ebb and flow of his own emotions.

And then there is the obstacle. There is always some hindrance that prevents the lover from immediately fulfilling his desire. In the case of Bernart de Ventadorn, it is the lady's indifference, her refusal to reciprocate the troubadour's love. He sometimes threatens to turn his back on *midons*.

A tal domna m'a rendutz  
c'anc nom amet de coratge,

.....  
oi mas segrai son uzatge :  
de cui que m' volha, serai drutz,  
e trametral per tot salut  
e aurai mas cor volatge.

("Estat ei com om esperdutz," vv. 9-16)

I gave myself to a woman who never loved me in her heart, . . . I shall no longer follow her ways. I shall be the lover of anyone who wants me ; I shall send greetings to everyone, and I shall have a fickle heart. (Nichols 92-93).

Predictably, however, he still remains faithful to his lady:

Fis-jois, ges n'ous posc oblidar,  
ans vos am e'us volh e'us tenh char,  
car m'etz de bela compenha (Lazar vv. 52-54)

Fis-jois, I cannot forget you, rather, I love you, want you, and cherish you because you are good company to me. (Nichols 93)

In *Wangbang Wideya*, the princess discreetly reciprocates the amorous desire of the hero. In contrast to the inner psychological barrier of troubadour poetry, the obstacle here is external: the marriage of the heroine. At the same time, it is to be noted that the marriage was never consummated, which leaves open the possibility for justifying the hero's kidnapping and ravishment of the princess.<sup>(39)</sup>

To hurry over the story of the wedding — the princess was in fact married to Raden Siūhamatra. The news spread that the princess was keeping her distance from her husband, and that they had not slept together; Raden Warastrasari was unwilling, and was revolted by the idea of making love with him (p. 69).

Of course, Raden Siūhamatra, of lower rank, forms an interesting contrast to Wangbang Wideya:

(The husband) is not the model prince, a hero possessing all manly virtues to an exemplary degree, but someone approaching much more nearly our idea of a normal human being<sup>(40)</sup> (Robinson 26).

This barrier of marriage reminds one of the *Tristan* where Yselt is married to the hero's uncle, King Mark. However, there is at least one difference. Although Brangien, the heroine's maid, replaced her mistress on the wedding night so as not to reveal the lovers' carnal consummation on the boat, there is no reason to assume that the maid replaced Yselt any other night. Let us also observe that, because of a series of unresolvable conflicts, the love of Tristan and Yselt can ultimately be consummated only in death (Thomas, "Circle," p. 52). As to the Georgian masterpiece *Vepkhistaosani*, there are two barriers. First, the heroine is to be married to another, the Khvarazmshah's son, for reasons of state. At the heroine's urging, Tariel slays his rival. In the ensuing political turmoil, Nestan-Darejan is kidnapped in a chest by Kadji slaves. Obsessed by this one love, the hero spends the rest of his days overcoming all sorts of obstacles until he finally achieves happiness in the arms of his inamorata. In any case, the function of the obstacle is to enhance the lover's passion until it becomes close to being volcanic.

The final verses of Wangbang Wideya reminds one of the ending of Thomas's *Tristan*. In the Javanese poem we read:

This is the end of the tale which I have composed from the *wayaß anteban*,<sup>(43)</sup> told in verse; now I do not mind being thought presumptuous ---. For it serves as the tears of those bowed down under the pain of heartache and longing. But how could it give relief? --- By becoming a Kiduß in the metre Rara Kaðiri. (P. 241)

The ostensibly ascetic purpose of this romance recalls the final words of Thomas's *Tristan*:

I have recited words and verses :  
I have created here an exemplum  
In order to embellish the story,  
To give pleasure to lovers,  
That they may find here and there  
Things they can recall  
To take great comfort  
Against inconstancy, Against wrong,  
Against pain, Against sorrow,  
And all the ruses of love !

(My translation)

Like his Javanese counterpart, the French poet suggests that lovers can find relief from their sorrows by identifying with the literary lover's pain and, by such externalization of their miseries, find relief in an aesthetic asceticism.<sup>(44)</sup> This seems to be true despite the fact that Tristan and Yselt find ultimate consummation in the grave whereas *Wangbang Wideya* ends on a happy note of marriage.

As we have seen, despite the noted differences, there are significant similarities among courtly lovers worldwide. Within the context of an inner world of refinement, human love becomes apotheosized, and the lovers take on a praeternatural aura. With the exception of the troubadour tradition, both hero and heroine are seen as gods, as it were. In spite of such apotheosis, the male lover in all traditions studied becomes a slave of passion. Love is kismet. That fate is expressed sometimes in a dream, a philter, or that first look. Like the Roman god Janus, love faces ecstasy one way and woe in another. Such absolute passion is frequently associated with death. At times it seems the lover loses his life and soul or, despite his demise, the eternal flame of love burns on. Nature can reflect the joy of love as in spring or autumnal miseries. On the positive side, the song of a bird can betoken amorous desire, whether it be the Provencal or Persian nightingale or the Javanese *cucur*. On the negative side, there is always an obstacle to the immediate fulfillment of desire. It may be an internal barrier like the lady's diffidence or something external like marriage or a kidnapping. Both the Javanese poet and Thomas of Bute suggest that their poems can bring relief to lovers who listen through an aesthetic ascesis. East is East, and West is West; but beneath the cool surface of cultural differences flows the lava of desire for a refined passion that erupts in the courtly poetry of Eurasian literature.

### Notes and References

1. See Thomas, "Mystic," 1994; "Shaman," 1995; "Chiaroscuro," 1996. Our comparative study on Persian literature will be forthcoming in *Lugman* (Iran).
2. In many stories, Pañji is forever becoming involved in amorous affairs with women of all ranks; he loves them and leaves them (Hooykaas 10). However, in the particular story we will be concentrating on, his emotions are centered on one woman, and this in spite of the fact that he has more than one wife. Furthermore, even after his marriage, the heroine Raden Warastrasari remains his principal wife (3, §§148a-149a, p. 223), although Raden Kesawati is also respected but placed on a lower plane of affection. Indeed, both are compared to the heavenly nymphs, Supraba and Nilotama (3, §179a, p. 237; also see pp. 313-14). Furthermore, let us note that, when the Queen of Daha offers the hero a gift of seven noble girls, he rejects it for fear of offending the princess (3, §§11b-12a, p. 161).
3. In his *Pañji-verhalen*, R.M. Poerbatjaraka gives full summaries of eight Pañji stories: 1 Malay, 1 Cambodian, 5 Modern Javanese, and 1 Middle Javanese. Pañji appears under various names: Mantri Koripan, Ino Kertapati, Inao (Hooykaas 62).
4. Something similar occurs in Jayadeva's Indian masterpiece, *Gītagovinda*: union, separation, reunion (Siegel 159).
5. In 1876, R. Van Eck translated another Pañji story, the *Bagus Umbara*, into Dutch.
6. All citations from *Wangbang Widaya* will be from this edition.



7. Old Javanese literature was written from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. The period of Middle Javanese is from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (Robson 57). Modern Javanese dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the present (Robson 59). Thus *Wangbang Wideya* can be said to be "medieval" because of its position between Old and Modern Javanese literature.
8. *Kakawin* literature, predating that of *Kidung*, is epic literature frequently dealing with subjects taken from Indian epics or *purāṇas*. *Kidung* literature treats "historical" works on the past of Java, the *Alis-alis*, Ijo, to which magical powers are ascribed, *wayang* (shadow play) stories of a strongly ballad flavor, although overlaid with courtly refinements (Robson 19). Despite the oversimplification, let us say that *Kakawin* is epic and *Kidung* is romance. The *Kidung* style is a continuation of the *Kakawin* insofar as the former harks back to the latter for its learned or ornate embellishments (Robson 7). There is no such continuation between *Kidung* and modern post-Islamic Javanese literature. In actuality, the distinction between Javanese and Balinese *Kidung* during this period is not an easy one. Although written in Middle Javanese, the origin of the *Kidung* seems to be Bali and the Balinese influence becomes more and more marked as time goes on. Furthermore, much of this *Kidung* literature has been preserved in Bali (Robson 7). Finally, it is not surprising that these romances were sung (Robson 16) as were the poems of Bernart de Ventadorn. *Wangbang Wideya*, the troubadours, and *Tristram* are all praised as musicians.
9. *Wangbang Wideya* is divided into 3 cantos. The *tengahan* is composed of 2 meters (or metrical complexes). Cantos 1 & 3 have the same meters, i.e., Rara Kadir. In Canto 2 we find the Pamandara meter. Within the canto not all stanzas are alike; there are two kinds which alternate in pairs, the only exception being the first and second pairs:
  - A) For the meter Rara Kadir, the canto contains stanzas with the following number of syllables : 62, 62 ; 84, 84 ; 80, 80 ; 33, 33 ; 80, 80 ; 33, 33 ; etc. (The canto has no fixed length.)
  - B) For the meter Pamandara, the pattern is : 43, 43 ; 73, 73 ; 60, 60 ; 66, 66 ; 60, 60 ; 66, 66 ; etc. In addition to the number of syllables per stanza, another principle of the *tengahan* meter is the occurrence of fixed vowels in final position:
    - A) For Rara Kadir (from the beginning of the canto) : 0, 0 ; i, i ; a, a ; i, i ; a, a ; i, i ; etc.
    - B) For Pamandar, the pattern is : i, i ; u, u ; a, a ; a, a ; a, a ; a, a ; etc. (Robson 21)
10. Since the story of this romance is not too well known in the West, here is a summary of the plot.
 

Although betrothed to the prince, the princess has been married to another; in disguise, the prince defeats an enemy, and demonstrates his superiority in the arts; he then carries off the princess, marries her, and finally all are reconciled. We are told that the young couple are only two months short of being happily married when the difficulties arise: first the disappearance of the princess, then the prince's infatuation with another, and finally her marriage to someone else. All is seemingly lost; in the guise of a young brahman, however, the prince establishes himself at the court of Daha and takes the first steps toward winning her back. The next great difficulty is a military one: an alliance of kings under the king of Lasem has to be defeated. When this is done, the prince has already put the king of Daha and Raden Singhamatra in his gratitude by his mastery of the arts, and thus the time is ripe to seize the princess, carry out his desire, and return home in glory (Robson 25).

For a more detailed summary, see Robson 2-6

- 11 At this point in times, both in Europe and in Java/Bali, the religious and the secular are integrated. After the medieval period, the West has tried to disentangle the two, whereas in Java/Bali the trend has been in the direction of greater integration (Lansing 52).
12. One thinks immediately of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā in Jayadeva's *Gītagovinda*. In the Indian poem, Kṛṣṇa is a god who acts like a man; in the Javanese work Wangbang Wideya is a man who acts like a god. The ultimate effect is not dissimilar.
13. According to the literary convention of the time, these servants are females of humble position whose function is to supply mischievous asides at the dramatically necessary junctures. Their comments are not coarse, but to the point (Robson 26). One might also add that their down-to-earth attitude forms a counter-balance to the more idealistic aspect of the romance.
14. Etymologically the name already means "Incarnation of Parameswara", but in this text it is apparently equivalent to Parameswar, the Supreme Lord (Robson 262).
15. Another name for Siwa (Robson 263).
16. A name of the god Smara (Robson 311).
17. All citations from *The Knight of the Panther Skirt* are from the translation of Katherine Vivian.
18. Bernart's *Persona* is that of the timid, humble lover, his trademark (Kendrick 170).
19. All citations of Bernart's poetry are taken from the edition of Moshe Lazar.
20. All translations of Bernart's poetry are taken from the Nichols's edition.
21. See Robson, P.249, n. 39b.
22. Makaradwaja is a name of Smara, the god of love, meaning "he who has a *makara* (sea serpent) on his flag" (Robson 242, n.1a). Could this sea-serpent be a phallic symbol? Compare the dragon candles of "Palace Style Poetry" of China (6<sup>th</sup> century A.D.), where the dragon could potentially be a fertility image (Birrell, *Songs*, p. 18).
23. In the *Bagus Umbara*, the Princess dreams that Pañji is making love to her :

When finally (at dawn)  
She fell asleep a little,  
She dreamed of the prince  
The crown prince of Koripan  
In Bali, renowned for his beauty  
His hair was in her hair, and while  
She sat on his knees; he caressed her.

(My translation)

24. In the "courtly" version (Thomas and Gottfried von Strassburg), the passion lasts forever; in the "common" version (Beroul and Eilhart von Oerge), it lasts for three and four years respectively.
25. The mother of Yselt had brewed the philter for her daughter and King Mark, her future husband.

26. One should distinguish between the external fate of the Tristan as objectified by the philter and the more internal, psychological fate of Bernart the troubadour.

27. And yet, paradoxically, Bernart indicates that it is love that gave him life:

Que'en non pose viure ses amar,  
que d'amor sui engenoitz.

("Can la boschatges es flontz," vv. 15-16)

I cannot live without love, for I was engendered by love (Nichols 158)

28. We will be using the Qazvini and Ghani edition of Hāfiz's poems, henceforth abbreviated as QG followed by the section number.

29. Pañji is spurred on to action by his pain, i.e., he makes plans for his elopement with the Princess.

30. An article of clothing. This reference makes one think of Guilhem de Cabestanh's Canto II:

C'ab un fil de son mantel var,  
s'a lieis fos plazen qem dones.  
mi fera plus javzen estar  
ancar mais que no pogra far  
autra del mon c'ab srm volgues.

"Anc mais norm fo semblan," vv. 40-50).

For with a single thread from her mantle of squirrel fur, if it should please her to give it to me, she would make me more happy and richer than could any other woman who would grant me the last favors.

(My translation)

31. All poems cited will be from Anne Birrell's edition of *New Songs from a Jade Terrace* (1986).
32. Although *lan* is translated by "orchid", in fact the flower is a thoroughwort (equatorium Chinese) (Waley 17).
33. The presence of the moon here is, without doubt, a carry-over from the *kakawin*, in which the heavenly luminary plays an important role (Zoetmulder 191). Also see W.H. Rassers' doctoral dissertation, *De Pandji roman*, in which he proposes that the Pañji story is basically a moon myth reflecting an exogamous tribal division into two fratrics.
34. Male and female respectively of the same species (Zoetmulder 200).
35. Likewise for the *walik*, another bird ((Zoetmulder 199).
36. Ratih is goddess of the moon (Basset 87).
37. "Can vei la lauzeta mover."
38. In *Li sao* (4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.), Ch'u Yuan also uses a bird as a messenger of love. On the literal level it involves the quest for a beautiful woman. However, on a deeper level it is a complex political allegory in which Ch'u Yuan seeks a reconciliation with the prince of Ch'u who had sent him into exile (Wang 70-71). As distinguished from the previous three examples, the ultimate interest is political, not romantic.

39. See Robson, p.287, n. 117a.
40. A lesser obstacle, though still formidable, is the King of Lasem who declares war on the King of Daha because, when he failed to find Raden Warastrasari when she had disappeared, she was married to another. He is described as having a mania for women (2, § 2a, p.115). Whereas, in comparison with the husband, it is a question of mediocre vs. superior, here it is lust vs. love. Of course, love in the personage of Pañji wins out.
41. See Robson 30 for an explanation.
42. For the Javanese poem, may these words not reflect the ancient belief of South-east Asian people in the power of "formed sounds", word magic (Lansing 77-78).

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Department of French  
City University of New York  
New York, U.S.A.

# Psychoanalytic Theory and Aesthetic Value

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SALIM KEMAL

Explanatory psychological theories are important to our understanding of aesthetic appreciation and evaluation. By examining some general features of Freudian psychoanalysis, we can hope to become clearer about their contribution.

Freud's theory is favoured over others because of its importance in the history of the analytic movement. Many later theorists follow him in the issues they consider. Even if they may propose different explanations and prognoses, they agree with Freud that the actions of a subject have a meaning which must be excavated. And it is the latter claim, with the philosophical issues it subtends, which is important to a general examination of the relevance of psychoanalytic theory to aesthetic response and evaluation.

Other advantages of Freud's theory lie in its value as a heuristic tool. His work is available in translation<sup>1</sup>, in which the theory is presented with a brilliant clarity, and it possesses a useful unity. His last work, *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*, puts forward Freud's mature thought in a clearly organised form, so that his earlier writings on aesthetics and the development of his theory can be provided with a context.

## I

Aesthetic appreciation usually proceeds by assessing a work on the basis of some conception of the nature of art and aesthetic value. Psychoanalysis proposes, first, that we re-understand our actions and intentions generally. Events thought accidental are shown to be significant. Lapses of memory, slips of tongue, likes and dislikes, all of which might be thought arbitrary and incapable of general theoretical explanation, are significant because they are symptoms of the play of psychological mechanisms in a personality. On the basis of claims about the unconscious as a part of the structure of the mind, apparently accidental events are shown to belong to a pattern, and the proposal is that they can be seen to have a meaning. Second, so far as the production and appreciation of art are part of our psychic life, psychoanalysis will aim to explain them also. It proposes that aesthetic activity is at one with the rest of our psychic nature and based on

the very psychological mechanisms which explain jokes, parapraxes, and ordinary likes and dislikes. Accordingly, it requires us to assess the meaning of works, their order, and the relation of their parts, to appreciate them from a psychoanalytic point of view. To a commensurate degree, it seems, appreciation must adjust to theory.

In requiring this adjustment, analytic theory is not trying to make our aesthetic response redundant. It may seem that once we know aesthetic response is based on a psychological mechanism, which is in some sense the *real* ground for our response, we can attend directly to the mechanism, and from there infer all our conclusions about the validity, importance, and interest of the work. However, rather than making the response redundant, supporters of psychoanalysis need only maintain that appreciation belongs within a context provided by the theory, and so the inferences we draw from our response must be constrained by the explanations which the theory provides. Such a revision seems to accept both the reality of aesthetic response and the explanation of its nature without claiming also that the first must be reduced to the second. And if the former is irreducible, then it is possible to find analytic theory inadequate because it fails to deal satisfactorily with some features of our response. In these cases we might rely more heavily on the vocabulary of aesthetic response than on the explanatory concepts provided by the analytic theory.

If we must accept both the possibility of bringing psychoanalytic explanation to bear and the legitimacy of aesthetic response and its attendant appreciation and evaluation, then the use of analytic theory in understanding aesthetic response may be secondary in two ways. The explanation of how meanings are established is gained by *extending* to aesthetic activity the conclusions gained in other contexts. The extension may be contingent: the theory intends to explain all our psychic life, including the production and reception of painting and literature, but it happens that for various reasons works of fine art have not been at the centre of attention. Be that as it may, the development of theory has meant that its contribution to art remains dependent on its validity in other fields, and so is secondary to the theory.

Further, a concern with the relation of psychoanalysis to evaluation is secondary also in that its contribution is important only if it explains features which are vital to evaluation. Psychoanalysis seeks to increase our self-consciousness about ourselves, and treats the subject as an acting and feeling being, capable of understanding his own actions. In part, it succeeds by bringing certain factors to consciousness and thereby changing consciousness. In order to do this, it must not only be able to accept the reality of a subject's self-understanding, it must also show the basis of that understanding in the subjects' own history as a way of bringing them to extend their self-understanding. It

cannot, then, by-pass the subjects' self-understanding of their engagement in aesthetic activity. Rather, it seeks to bring them to a better understanding of their own activity<sup>2</sup>, and may be expected to treat their aesthetic response as irreducible. Psychoanalytic explanations do not seek to substitute analytic concepts and explanatory connections for aesthetic evaluation but try to show that the validity claimed for evaluations follows a psychoanalytically significant pattern.

However, it may seem unclear that psychoanalysis succeeds in taking our claims seriously. When Freud explains that religion satisfies an emotional need for social unity under strong laws which are thought of as if they were authorised by a person-like agent<sup>3</sup>, he seems to treat our self-understanding less than seriously in that he provides an explanation in which religion is dismissed as a mere psychological contrivance. And we have no reason to expect that analytic theory would be any more sympathetic to aesthetic evaluation.

This criticism misunderstands Freud's intention in writing on religion. As he makes clear<sup>4</sup>, his concern is to give an account of the psychology of religion, and he intentionally leaves aside questions of the truth validity of religious claims. These latter will continue to be accepted or rejected on their own grounds. Their truth or falsity may affect the psychology of religion in that a satisfactory proof of God's existence and the attendant religious practices is likely to cast a different light on their socially cohesive force. But this need not contradict the psychological explanation of religion. Similarly, analytic theory may accept the validity of aesthetic response even while it seeks to explain it.

This is not to dismiss the criticism entirely, for it reminds us that we need to specify analytic claims. If the theory is used only to account for the psychology of some practice such as religion while questions of its validity are left aside, then we may expect that the theory will similarly be silent on aesthetic validity. For the psychological explanation of aesthetic activity arguably has little connection with the epistemic validity of our responses and valuations. Alternatively, psychoanalysis may contribute to our understanding of art in other ways, perhaps through homologies between the epistemology of analytic practice and the interpretation of an art work. All these possibilities only remind us that we need to examine the specific criteria of aesthetic evaluation if we are to understand the theory's relevance. And here the theory is secondary in that its importance depends on what we see as crucial features in the production, appreciation and evaluation of works, and on how well it explains them.

The points raised above may seem obvious but they need to be made. Practitioners of psychoanalytic criticism, and their critics, often ignore questions of the detailed



interaction between evaluation and theory. They try instead to provide a general account of their interdependence, thinking that this will provide a space for deploying explanations of the specific relations involved. However, though few would argue that every generalisation must be mistaken, a concern with the aesthetic evaluation of objects and works imposes constraints on the way in which a theory enters consideration. For specific claims are important because our appreciation of a particular work from the view-point of the theory will depend on the role theory plays in explaining that given work.

## II

To clarify the relation of theory to appreciation, we will argue that the truth of psychoanalytic theory is important to the aesthetic evaluation of works<sup>1</sup>. First, a number of points need to be made.

To begin with there is the matter of criteria for evaluation. Works of criticism contain numerous references to various criteria. Some critics point to a writer's style, some writers try to make the narrative seamless by minimising signs of their intrusion. Some critics stress a consistency of moral vision, others praise an author's picture of the world. In part this variety occurs because literature displays its art in diverse ways, and critics are trying to articulate their response to each work. But it is present also because critics' reading and evaluation of works rests on a conception of what is important in a work.

In this paper, the presence of unity and depth will be taken as grounds for evaluating works positively. The two are not always thought to be aesthetically significant. Modernists often decry the need for unity, taking it to mean some Aristotlean unity of plot<sup>2</sup>. Similarly, Pop Art thrives on shallowness – in colour, in its penchant for gimmickery, in its concern with ephemera – yet maintains a serious interest in the world it represents. Nevertheless, 'unity' and 'depth' are useful in spite of being less than generally relevant. First, these criteria usually go with the conservative defence that psychology has no relevance for aesthetic evaluations. By showing how the latter, based on the unity and depth of a work, depend on psychoanalytic theories, we can consider the issue in its more conservative formulation. Second, it may be possible to explain unity and depth by using deeper theories, and once we have shown the relevance of psychoanalysis to the unity or depth of a work, and so explained its importance to aesthetic evaluation, we may also extend that explanation.

Clearly, such an extension will have to be justified by further arguments. This raises another issue : the wide range of possible explanations of unity must make it more amorphous in meaning than it is effective in use. Rather than aid our understanding of the way in which theory is material to evaluation, it is useless unless supplemented by

some explanation of what constitutes unity. Yet when the latter is available, unity becomes redundant.

In defence of unity and depth we may accept the criticism yet suspend its implications. Unity is ambiguous and so its effectiveness may depend on the theory, if any, which it is substituting for. But it does not depend entirely on that theory. For not every theory will be capable of yielding the results we get from the use of these concepts. Its users will have to defend their claims, so that the use of unity need not lead to the sort of incoherence hinted at by saying that it is amorphous in meaning. Rather, unity is positively useful in that it organises a number of deeper theories while actually requiring instead of precluding a rational defence of the evaluative criteria which those theories contain.

Another qualification in considering the importance of psychoanalysis to aesthetic evaluation is that it is most easily applicable to persons and their actions. Rather than examine the features which, for example, are stressed in Lacan's theory, it is simplest to look to homologies with our understanding of persons. Freud's writings have been thought to invite such attention, and Lacan's later emphasis on language does not show that this concern is mistaken at every level. There *are* limitations that accrue to this person-oriented psychoanalysis – restrictions Lacan intends to overcome by using linguistics – but the person-oriented theory can be examined for itself within these restrictions<sup>7</sup>. Accordingly, it becomes simplest to consider narrative works like novels and films, whose structure is made up of the actions and motivations of characters. A fictional character responds to the situation an author creates for him just like his real counterpart. Fictionality does not consist in represented motivations and actions being implausible, though they may in the novel depend on the limited context set up by the work itself.

Once we accept these restrictions, the conclusions we arrive at will have a limited validity because not all works are narratives constituted by the actions of characters. How far we can extend the validity of our conclusions will be determined by the comprehensiveness of psychoanalytic theory in relation to other features of works – whether it can explain aspects of non-representational art, the order in paintings, the nature of our response, the role in all art forms of the language and literality which is crucial to gaining psychological competence, and so on<sup>8</sup>.

A further point is that the 'aesthetic' is, so to speak, under-analysed here. Some understanding of it has been implicit in what has gone above, namely that it has been understood as a response, dependent on a subject's experience, which has validity over other subjects because it has other and more justification than an expression of purely

derives many theses about the aesthetic from G.T. Fechner. But not every part of that characterisation is crucial to understanding for under-analysing the 'aesthetic' is that as psychoanalysis explains art and aesthetic response, so our understanding the importance of analysis to evaluation. An one reason of the latter will be altered<sup>9</sup>, so it is best to hold off making claims about the aesthetic until the contribution of theory is clearer.

### III

Given these qualifications, the importance of psychoanalytic theory to the evaluation of works can be proposed in the following way. We take a novel or film whose structure depends on the represented actions and motivations of a group of characters<sup>10</sup>. The actions that the characters perform and the reasons put forward in explanation go to make up the novel or film. And the latter may be thought aesthetically better if they give us a fuller understanding of their characters at the same time as the sequence of their actions is united in the structure of the novel. The more necessary detail or acuity the writer exhibits in developing characters in the context of the novel, or the more deeply the problems and their resolution in the film or novel touch some unavoidable features of our conception of human beings, the better a work we shall think it.

This suggests that we look to the truthfulness of actions and motivations. But 'truthfulness' is not to be understood by reference to events which actually occurred. Rather, it must be understood in terms of the plausibility of the actions, motivations, and situations being described. A work will be valued for providing a better understandings of these factors. And this claim seems to bring in a conception of novels as having to do with explanations of actions and motivations, in that a situation in a novel is plausible to the extent that its depiction may be expected to exhibit the reasons for their occurrence and nature. Here, as a theory of behaviour and personality, psychoanalysis provides a standard in that the actions and events represented in a novel must be compatible with and capable of being explained by psychoanalysis if they are to be plausible. That is, for the sequence of actions and events in a film or novel to be satisfactorily understandable and recognisable as actions, they must satisfy the requirements of explanation put forward in the theory. In other words, there may be instances where works are found implausible because the conception of action and motivation which a work contains fails to satisfy the requirements of the theory. Further, a novel or film is constituted by the actions and motivations of its characters. Its plot, the story and order of which are formed by following and relating the interaction between characters, the narrative which is moved by the mechanisms governing actions and motivations – these, among other things, make up the work itself. A novel may be much more than the events being depicted, but it is nothing

(Tathandlung), he describes the ultimate in terms of the concept of the free act which underlies all acts.

Nishida summed up his key assertions concerning art and aesthetic experience in a short essay he wrote as a preface to an edition of Max Klinger's *Painting and Line Drawing*: "Art is neither a mere description of reality nor a mere subjective fancy. The so-called real world is not the only world given to us. Indeed, the world constructed by such a concept must rather be said to be the mere surface of reality. In the back of such a world is the flow of a truer reality, filled with a larger life whose depths cannot be fathomed. Precisely this reality is the object of art, and this aesthetic world, like our life itself, is infinitely free and profoundly rich."<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, aesthetic experience is not to be regarded as simply an interlude in our contact with the real world as ordinarily conceived, an experience in which we adopt a reflective, distanced or contemplative stance toward an aesthetic object of some kind. By contrast, aesthetic experience is experience of the ultimate, or put another way, of the true self which is the universe: "... we attain to an even deeper self-consciousness in aesthetic intuition than we do in mere conceptual self-consciousness. It is an error to think that aesthetic intuition is unselfconscious or nonconscious in a sense similar to perceptive consciousness. In aesthetic intuition we transcend the plane of conceptual self-consciousness, include it internally, and truly attain to self-consciousness of the free self."<sup>6</sup> It follows that the creative activity of the artist is among the most extraordinary of all activities. To create in this way is to be in contact with the ultimate, the reality underlying the world of nature: hence Nishida can say, strikingly: "The act of creation is not an act in the natural world." [A&M, p.161] Or again, in Kantian terms: "the artist lives within things in themselves."<sup>8</sup>

It is appropriate to note further a point which Nishida does not make explicitly but which follows from his metaphysic and which is taken for granted in what he has to say about Goethe. The one and the many are non-different: to use Nishida's phrase, they have absolutely contradictory identity (*zettai mujunteki jikodoitsu*).<sup>9</sup> Rightly regarded, therefore, ultimate reality is fully present in every particular. Just as for Blake the universe can be experienced via a grain of sand, for Nishida anything, however small, transient or insignificant, can be the vehicle for the final insight into what there is. This ultimate insight is of something which is in the last analysis beyond description: as he put this point in the vocabulary of the third and last of the conceptual frameworks he devised that of the place of nothingness, *mu no basho*, nothing can be said of the ultimate: "it

has completely transcended the standpoint of knowledge, and may perhaps be called 'the world of mystic intuition', unapproachable by word or thinking."<sup>10</sup> However, it can be hinted at obliquely by an artist who can feel the ultimate in the particular and can so depict the particular as to direct our attention in the appropriate way. To do this does not require a long description or a detailed depiction: indeed detail and expansiveness will get in the way, perpetuating our condition of being trapped in the web of conceptual discriminations, a web which veils rather than reveals the truth. A short poem is all that is needed to direct us to ultimate truth. It is perhaps no accident that the *haiku* should have been so cherished in a zen-informed culture (and this is not to underestimate the purely linguistic reasons for its viability in Japanese): since the ultimate is fully present in everything - in the one hand as in the two when clapping - any thing or event, rightly understood, can indicate the way to the ultimate. This is an issue to which I will return later when dealing directly with Nishida's reaction to Goethe.

These are the general beliefs which inform Nishida's consideration of Goethe: it is now appropriate to set out the complementary beliefs held by Santayana.

Like Nishida in one respect, Santayana adopted certain major philosophical positions at the start of his career and, though he modified the conceptual structures he used to articulate them, these bedrock convictions remain invariant in his philosophy. Most fundamental among these are his materialism and epiphenomenalism: for Santayana reality is the material world as described by science, the mind being not a separate entity or type of substance but an epiphenomenon of matter. There is no spiritual somewhat behind the material universe, no realm to which we may penetrate in moments of privileged insight. What there is matter in a state of constant flux. We are of this world, because this world is all there is: "In truth...man is an animal, a portion of the natural flux; and the consequence is that his nature has a moving centre..."<sup>11</sup> There is no room in such a system for mysticism: knowledge is knowledge of nature, and it is gained via conceptualisation of the flux of experience and representational perception.

Granted such a framework, Santayana has to take a view of art, aesthetic experience, the artist, and the function of the imagination of a kind quite other from that offered by Nishida. Most of what Santayana has to say about Goethe he set out in works from the earlier part of his career, from the period in which he elaborated his first philosophical system in the five volumes of *The Life of*

*Reason* (1905-6), and so it is necessary to say briefly what this work is about. As is also the case with Nishida's *Inquiry into the Good*, Santayana's ultimate purpose in this work is an ethical one. In this period he adopts a variety of ethical eudaemonism: happiness is the good for humankind, and it is best achieved by adopting what he calls the life of reason, the life in which our various wants, needs and desires are harmonised by the use of reason. The latter takes its data from the lessons of experience, the chief lesson being that happiness can be achieved only by accepting the conditions which bound all human endeavour. *The Life of Reason* is a survey of human institutions - of which art is one - from the point of view of this eudaemonism. Of each the question is asked: does this institution, or this form of it, help or hinder humankind in its search for rational and harmonious happiness? <sup>12</sup> Art is justified only if in some way it helps us live more rationally, which for Santayana is equivalent to saying more happily. There is not space here to consider Santayana's views on each how each of the arts does this <sup>13</sup>: granted the subject in hand, it is necessary to focus on his views on poetry.

Throughout his career Santayana defines aesthetic experience, of both artist and spectator (using that term in a broad sense to cover reception of all the arts), as immediate experience. <sup>14</sup> He never makes the sense of this phrase in this context absolutely precise, though he clearly cannot mean that in aesthetic experience the flux of experience is entirely unconceptualised. Rather, what he appears to mean is that the special gift of the artist is to be able to break free of inherited conceptual habits, to be able to escape from the grip of pre-existent conceptual sets and to see things and experience in a fresh light, exhibiting their significance to us. He applies this view to the poet in *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion* (1900). Great poetry - and the qualification is significant - he defines as "analysis for the sake of creation". <sup>15</sup> The great poet retains a certain innocence of vision, being able to disintegrate the conventionalities of humdrum experience, "and then out of that living but indefinite material to build new structures, richer, finer, fitter to the primary tendencies of our nature, truer to the ultimate possibilities of the soul. Our descent into the elements of our being is then justified by our subsequent free ascent toward its goal; we revert to sense only to find food for reason; we destroy conventions only to construct ideals." <sup>16</sup> No.

What Santayana is driving at becomes clearer if we concentrate on what these 'new structures' might be and how they are related to ideals, this last being a concept of central importance in his theory of poetry. Human beings are never

in perfect accord with their environment, both animate and inanimate. To be fully in accord with the environment would consist in that state in which the environment satisfied all human interests. We have concepts and beliefs which embody our notions of what this state of total accord would be like. They are our ideas of perfection, our ideals. Ideals cannot be the product of the understanding, since in Santayana's usage of the term the understanding is the faculty which most accurately records what is the case, rather than what we would prefer were the case. The faculty responsible for the production of ideals, Santayana argues, is the imagination, and indeed the formation of appropriate ideals he regards as its most important function.<sup>17</sup> To live without ideals Santayana regards as an abject failure of rationality: to live well we must live with them constantly in mind, otherwise we are adrift and directionless. Without ideals, "men would be horses harnessed to their own chariot, docile perhaps and hardworking, but neither knowing where they go, nor indeed going anywhere. All life in the world is also, if rational, life in the ideal..."<sup>18</sup> Moreover it is clear that for Santayana ideals are not to be regarded as logically isolated from one another: the life of reason demands that our ideal vision of life be comprehensive and inclusive, in effect that we have a complete set touching all the major areas of life. These sets of ideals are the new structures articulated by major poets.<sup>19</sup>

To live without regard for ideals, or to have few and fragmentary ones, is to be in the condition Santayana calls barbarism: "For the barbarian is the man who regards his passions as their own excuse for being; who does not domesticate them either by understanding their cause or by conceiving their ideal goal. He is the man who does not know his derivations or perceive his tendencies, but who merely feels and acts, valuing his life for its force and filling, being careless of its purpose and its form...his delight is in abundance and vehemence; his art, like his life, shows an exclusive respect for quality and splendour of materials. His scorn for what is poorer and weaker than himself is only surpassed by his ignorance of what is higher."<sup>20</sup> Barbarism in this sense Santayana regarded as a central feature of the Romantic outlook, a point to which I will return in more detail presently when dealing with his interpretation of *Faust*.

The working out and expressing of such comprehensive visions of the ideal is not easy and is not within the powers of the vast majority of human beings: those individuals who have the ability to articulate these visions are the supreme among the world's poets. They have an imagination powerful enough to articulate one of the few genuinely different world-views humanity has yet

makes it immaterial to our understanding of behaviour generally, so to our understanding of represented actions; or where it is false but acceptable in the way some myths are part of the general culture, there its role and spurious validity is open to explanation – and which ever theory provides a satisfactory account of the general acceptance of psychoanalysis will become important to aesthetic evaluation because it succeeds where analytic explanations failed. Thus, the deeper theory will be important for the reasons which would have made the truth of psychoanalysis important. If no deeper defence of analytic theory is available, there we may expect so many variations in the way it is treated by author and audience that general rules are unlikely to give us much help in accounting for the many roles it can play. On the other hand, if analytic theory is valid, then other understandings of human behaviour are unsuccessful or shallow. Accordingly, it is not possible to understand actions fully without analytic theory; therefore, previous understandings are shallow and so fail in aesthetic evaluations or are false and give rise to incoherent sequences of action and so render impossible the unity of a work in which they are embodied and therefore also fail their aesthetic evaluation.

Our assumption is that analytic theory is valid; that is the basis of our interest in asking whether it is important to aesthetic evaluation. And the answer given in reply to the first point also goes to answer the second. For it only *seems* that a work may be unified – in so far as the motivations and behaviour constituting the novel are independent of analytic theory – yet may satisfy the balances and relationships thought necessary to aesthetic evaluation. If psychoanalytic explanations are true, then the unity gained without analytic theory will be merely shallow because it does not satisfy the requirements of an adequate explanation.

Both these answers are open to an objection based on the distinction made in the third point raised above. This was the assertion that psychoanalysis makes no contribution to aesthetic evaluations of novels because in these our interest is in the way ideas are expressed. This distinctiveness of the expression of ideas in a novel may be brought out through a phrase used by Isenberg<sup>11</sup> when he talks of the “aesthetic mode of commerce with human speech”. In the context of the types of work we are considering, characters utter speeches not to evince psychoanalytic truths but as a part of the embodiment of ideas in the events and actions of the novel. Here the constraints of psychoanalytic explanation are as dispensable as any other “non- aesthetic” mode of speech and understanding; and in the aesthetic mode our concern is not with truth or falsity but with the excellence of expression and its resulting unity.

This position may be summarised in the following way. It holds, first, that the only questions important to aesthetic evaluation concern how well or badly ideas are



expressed or embodied in a novel and, second, that the truth of psychoanalysis is immaterial to how well ideas are embodied. Consequently, Psychoanalysis is dispensable in aesthetic evaluation. For example, an author may consistently represent people as motivated by spiritual purposes in order to embody ideas of the essentially striving nature of human beings, and may produce an aesthetically excellent work on this basis, without having to accept the significance of the psychoanalytic theory of behaviour or the constraints it might impose on our understanding of the actions performed by characters in his work.

Plausible though this may seem, we may question both its assertions. To take the first one : we may question the claims made for expression, for it is not clear why it should be incommensurable with psychoanalytic truths. The assertion requires some way of characterising the supposedly distinctive nature of the "aesthetic mode" whose commerce with human speech allows us to prelude the use of analytic theory. Anything less would have to take some serious account of the theory – for the theory is essential to satisfactory explanations of the behaviour for which an "aesthetic" context is being sought – and so could not legislate to deny its importance generally. Yet this position has not been defended very successfully. Recent attempts to identify a distinctive aesthetic experience, response, or quality have foundered for a number of reasons. The most successful of these is proposed by Sibley<sup>14</sup>, who holds that the application of aesthetic concepts depends on the exercise of taste. Their contrast with, say, cognitive judgements, may be explained by saying that while the latter seek agreement with the world, aesthetic concepts are used in the hope of bringing other subjects to share the appreciation of a work or object or to articulate our own response. Here human speech enters "commerce" with the "aesthetic mode" by virtue of its part in bringing subjects to agree in appreciating a work. But there does no seem to be any reason to exclude psychoanalysis in this context, for the important thing is the exercise of taste and there is not reason to suppose that its exercise will be damaged by considerations of the truth of psychoanalysis.

Further, expression was explained in a way that involves some embodiment of ideas in works. The notion of "embodiment" need not be developed further here, for the issue we are concerned with does not turn on every aspect of its nature. But it is important in that, in the cases we are considering, the ideas expressed are exemplified in the motivations and actions of the novel's characters because these constitute the novel. Yet this exemplification seems to invite the use of psychoanalysis : the theory explains the behaviour of the characters whose actions embody the ideas of the novel and, if Lacan is right, will explain its very 'literality'.

This way of stating the need for analytic theory seems to beg the question over the second assertion – that the truth of theory is immaterial to expressing ideas. In answer to

that assertion we may point out that it is not clear what a satisfactory expression of ideas can be if it requires us to abjure all questions of truth, falsity, and theory. For surely the expression and embodiment of ideas can be found inadequate or bad precisely because it involves false representations. For example in *Paris, Texas*, directed by Wim Wenders, the film's ambition is vitiated by its inability to escape the misconceptions afflicting its characters. The film's ambition is set out by one character – a German-speaking doctor. Having treated a man found wandering in the Texan desert, the physician asserts that it is necessary to understand the past in order to diagnose the patient's present condition. *Paris, Texas* then develops as the film shows us more about the patient and his self-understanding. The film is resolved when the patient, having found his ex-wife, is able to unite their son with her but excludes himself from their union and returns to the road for reasons which are appropriate to the country-and-western clarity of emotion which seems to motivate the characters. By being resolved in this way, however, the film's ambition to diagnose the "American Condition" falls prey to its own naïve emotional mood. For the unity of the film, which is the basis for our aesthetic evaluation, is characterised by this sentimentality: the film itself then becomes one of the naively sentimental products it had set out to examine and, instead of diagnosing how these work, itself submits to and leads its audience to give in to that sentimentality. The film is resolved in terms of the very sentimentally it is supposedly explaining, and any attempt to understand the American Condition will treat the film as one among the many other symptoms of that condition. And if this diagnosis of the film is correct, then the ideas embodied or expressed in the work are being found inadequate and the film is considered bad precisely because it involves false representations of its characters and their motivations. This is not to say that people are not motivated by sentimentality in the way the film suggests, but that the film is bad because its attempted understanding of that sentimentality is itself sentimental and, so, false.

To put the matter in another way : the expression of ideas is naïve. And the claim is not that the author lacks the skill to produce images and convey ideas. The latter concern primarily the means of affecting unity and need not have anything to say of the character of the unity itself. Rather, the expression of ideas is inadequate to the truth of these ideas. In the case of *Paris, Texas* the diagnostic intention and its content are inadequately embodied in the behaviour of its characters – or in the sequence of their represented actions which constitute the film – just because the compulsion or necessity involved in the sequence and final order of actions is owed to the very condition which it is trying to understand. To gain its diagnostic goal the work would have to trade on a psychoanalytically true conception of characters and actions, and the film could not then

follow the order and compulsion of the sentimentality it is trying to understand. In the case like this one, where characters and their actions embody the ideas we are concerned with, the latter are inadequate to its ideas. Thus, the film fails aesthetically just because it fails to respect the truth of its ideas in its starting point, its development, and in the way events are organised in order to bring out the ideas expressed.

If these arguments are correct, then they defeat an important attack on the proposal that psychoanalytic theory is significant to aesthetic evaluation. For the claim was that the distinctive nature of aesthetic response, of aesthetic concerns, and of aesthetic unity qualified any "commerce with human speech" and so precluded claims that psychoanalytic theory contributed to aesthetic evaluation. By arguing as we have, we have shown the misconceptions involved in this claim.

Of course the force of such an argument depends on whether psychoanalytic theory is valid. We have assumed that it is. Just how significant a contribution it makes to aesthetic evaluation depends on how powerful a theory it is and how comprehensive its explanations are. We have acknowledged only that it can be one among a number of factors which are constituted by the motivations and actions of subjects. If it can tell us of other sorts of works and features, obviously its importance will increase commensurately. But that is something we have to consider by identifying and analysing the various claims made on behalf of psychoanalytic theory.

### Notes and References

1. Though some have questioned the use of overly objectivist terms to translate his humanistic concepts – cf. Bruno Bettelheim, *Freud and Man's Soul*.
2. This is not to say that the subject's self-conception is the basic criteria for the success of our explanation in the sense that we would be said to have failed to understand his activity if we used any terms other than those he used. That would be a very restrictive criteria which, in the case where, say, the subject is confused, would require the explanation also to be self-contradictory or as confused as the subject.
3. This description of Freud's claim is a rough composite of what he says in *Totem and Taboo*, *Civilisation and Its Discontents*, and *The Future of an Illusion*.
4. cf. *The Future of an Illusion* and *Civilisation and its Discontents*.
5. The issue of its truth is not chosen arbitrarily, but it should be made clear that our concern does not coincide with Lacan's understanding of the issue. Lacan claims: "That all texts see their literality increase in proportion to what they properly imply of an actual confrontation with truth, is that for which Freud's discovery demonstrates the structural reason" (*Écrits*, p. 364). This utterance is based on his claim about language and especially about Saussure's theory of language.

Saussure supposed that language was best understood as a system of signs. The sign, in turn, had two parts : a signifier, which was usually a sound that the users of a language recognised because they were able to distinguish it from others which were possible in the context; and a signified, which was the concept. The signifier was arbitrarily linked to the signified, in one sense, because any sound could have stood for a concept. 'House' in English and *bayt* in Arabic are two sounds which happen to share their signified, while other sounds play corresponding roles in other languages. The particular sound used is arbitrary in that there is nothing intrinsic to the sound itself which shows that it must be used in relation to a particular signified. However, once a relation between signifier and signified has been established in use, then within the language we are using their connection becomes as secure, for Saussure, as that between two sides of a single sheet of paper. Against the last claim Lacan argues that the link is insecure: Saussure's claim is mistaken because it ignores the process by which people come to refer to things in the world by using language. In order to identify the signified in the world, we must rely on judgement, which is less than incorrigible. And an important consequence of establishing that there is this lacunae is this : unconscious desires can interfere with the conscious use of language, causing the relation between signifier and signified to be distorted in ways explained by analytic theory. If the Real is taken to be the existent, then the Imaginary and the Symbolic are our means of access to the Real, where language – the Symbolic order – must interact with the Imaginary – in our psychological make-up in their attempt to reach the Real. While language is our only access to reality, any distortion in it is bound to affect our ability to deal with the world as it is independent of our desires. The utterance quoted above, then, is intended to tell us of the relation between psychology and language, where the latter sustains our grasp of the world.

While it may point to an important contribution analytic theory is thought to make to our understanding of literature by identifying the role of psychology in determining our use of language to grasp the world, it does not enter directly into our present consideration of aesthetic evaluation. By explaining the nature of literature it introduces constraints on our evaluation because it identifies the means by which art is displayed. But our concern at present is with aesthetic evaluation – with the art displayed – and the contribution that analytic theory makes to evaluating this exhibition.

6. Cf. Aristotle, *Poetics*, Chapter 7ff. Peter Handke, writing of *Left Handed Woman*, thinks consistency of tone more important than the unity of plot.
7. As Lacan's reading of Freud rests on a questionable theory of language, his claim to have escaped these restrictions is doubtful. Cf. R. Wollheim, "The Cabinet of Lacan", in *New York Review of Books*. 1976.
8. Such limitations militate towards identifying a particular conception of the psychological nature of literature, leaving aside, for example, the Lacanian conception.
9. Further, depending on the ways in which analytic theory contributes to evaluation, it may show how

- sociological, economic, or political theories are also material to understanding the 'aesthetic'.
10. Many richer descriptions of novels are possible. This one will suffice for our purposes. Other descriptions may add features, they will not necessarily change the argument being made here.
  11. The phrase is Freud's : see *Introductory Lectures*.
  12. A. Isenberg, "The Problem of Belief", in *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 13, (1955), pp. 395-407.
  13. Ibid. Similar claims about the distinctiveness of the aesthetic are made in the writings of Cleanth Brooks and W.K. Wimsatt.
  14. F. Sibley, "Aesthetic Concepts", *Philosophical Review*, 58, 1959. The arguments involved can be studied in more detail in *Aesthetics* edited by R. Scalafani and G. Dickie.

Chairman  
Department of Philosophy  
University of Dundee  
Scotland, U.K.

# A Developmental Approach To Religious Prejudices in *The Monk*

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JAMES WHITLARK

From the time of its origin in Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1765), gothic fiction has presented medievalist fantasies in terms of stock Protestant prejudices. Matthew G. Lewis's *The Monk* (1796) is among the most conspicuous of these fictionalized diatribes, for its very title indicates its target: Catholic monasticism, associated by Lewis with spiritual pride, debauchery, incest, murder, and Satanism. Both because of the book's recent bicentennial and the rising number of scholarly studies devoted to the gothic, that volume is being read and taught. How, though, can a modern reader respond to such religious prejudices as it exemplifies? Efforts to answer this question fall generally into one of two categories: (1) attempts to locate them with the historical context of the novels; (2) various psychological approaches.

## The Historical Context

Victor Sage argues that such gothic works as *The Monk* are part of a Protestant tradition "strongly related to the growth of the campaign for Catholic Emancipation from the 1770s onward until the first stage ends temporarily with the Emancipation Act of 1829..." (Sage 28-29). He does not, however, give any detailed correlation between the events of that campaign and the novels. A major obstacle to such a correlation is the complex and ambiguous history of religious persecution, susceptible to highly disparate interpretations. On the one extreme, in a 1994 study of Jacobites, Murray Pittock declares that for much of the eighteenth century, British Catholics such as Alexander Pope had "fewer rights than a South African black at the height of apartheid" (Pittock 108). On the other extreme, in a 1995 defense of the Irish Protestants ("a minority people who have found themselves under perennial attack"), Desmond Bowen emphasizes the tolerant, "latitudinarian spirit" of the Protestant ascendancy (Bowen backcover and 131). Nonetheless, Bowen's quotations of Protestant "mildness" all include some such diatribe as Rev. John Richardson's against the "horrors and corruptions of the church of Rome" (Bowen 130).

The crux is that anti-Catholic laws were severe, preventing recusants' suffrage, enrollment in any learned profession, inheritance of property, or marriage in their church, thus declaring their children illegitimate. As to actual enforcement, however, this varied from period to period and place to place, indeed, from individual to individual. In London, the last priest to be imprisoned for life for being a priest was in 1767, but arrests continued until 1771, with the accused being acquitted – as many actual priests had been for over a century (Newton 225). After one anti-Catholic riot, Joseph Berington complained, "Shall I sit down satisfied, because the good humour of a magistrate chooses to indulge me; whilst there are laws of which any miscreant has daily power to enforce the execution?" (Berington viii). In 1778, Catholics received the right to own property, but in 1780 Lord George Gordon (by some accounts delusional at the time), gathered fifty-thousand Protestants to an anti-Papist rally in St. George's Fields, Southwark (Newton 237). They became the vanguard of mobs throughout the country. In London, the rioting lasted six days, burning Catholic property and murdering its owners. What is notable is the capriciousness of the oppression. As Berington complained, enforcement of laws was unpredictable – as was also illegal violence. Two years lapsed between the 1778 Relief Act and the riots protesting it. Somewhat comparably, two years passed between the Catholic Relief Act of 1793 and the intensification of Catholic/Protestant tension into the battle of the Diamond, which led to the founding that year of the (anti-Catholic) Orange Society. By 1797, it had spread across Ireland and numbered about two-hundred thousand members. Certainly, many sources – economic, political, and theological – troubled relations between the denominations, but the situation cannot be described in terms of consistently followed policies. Aptly, Daniel Defoe said of one outbreak, mobs would "fight to the death against Popery without knowing whether Popery was a man or a horse" (Quoted in Newton 237). Normally mild-mannered Protestants became irrationally belligerent. John Wesley, for instance, "not only took an active part in the Protestant Association, which was behind the (Gordon) riots, but at his suggestion that body published a handbill after the rioting which declared that the Catholics themselves had committed all the outrages in order to be able to charge innocent persons with the crimes" (Newton 159).

What had the Catholics done to deserve such treatment? Protestants assumed Catholic believed: (1) "that the Pope held power to release subjects from their allegiance" to their kings; (2) that he could require Catholics to take up arms against their government; (3) that he was to them in some general sense infallible; (4) that he could "pardon perjury, rebellion or high treason"; (5) and that Catholics need not keep faith with "heretics." In 1788, the principal Catholic universities (the Sorbonne, Louvaine, Douay, Alcala, and

Salamanca) as well as a committee of leading British Catholics denied that Catholicism included any such beliefs (Connell 60; Bowen 144).

Perhaps anti-Popery took on its strangest forms when it was even turned against Protestants and atheists. What, for instance, was the cause of the de-Christianizing in France? In 1793, festivals were celebrated with “goddesses” on altars; campaigns of desecration were headed by former monks; many ecclesiastical buildings were destroyed leaving “naked dancers and drunken children in the ruined churches and among the gravestones ...”; and all but the most compromising priests were persecuted, exiled, or killed (McManners 88, 92, 113). Logic would seem to preclude Catholicism as a culprit. Many, Protestants, however, blamed the Catholics. Not only British Protestants felt this way but the former dean of the Protestant theological school of Montaubon wrote to Robespierre, “We have made Reason a sort of Heavenly Queen and we imitate the fury of fanaticism!” (Bouloiseau 217). The reference to “Heavenly Queen” meant that the revolutionaries were still lost in Catholic Mariolatry, which they had transformed into a Goddess of Reason. “Popery was no longer (to Britain) the enemy as such, but it was frequently cited as the influence that had created the despotic state of affairs from which the Revolution had emerged. Protestant England had made 1688 possible; Catholic France had made 1789 and 1792 inevitable” (Deane 22; Richards 23-24). Burke writes, “These Atheistical fathers have a bigotry of their own; and they have learnt to talk against monks with the spirit of a monk” (Burke 125). According to Burke, the anti-Papist, pro-Jacobin, Dissenter, Rev. Price was like a Catholic – an “arch-pontiff ... with all the plenitude, and with more than the boldness of the papal deposing power in its meridian fervour of the twelfth century ...” (25).

According to Protestant polemics, Catholicism had added superstitions to Christianity in order to bolster clerical authority. Thus, anything but the most narrowly defined canon of beliefs smacked of Popery. Cartoons, for instance, showed Methodist ministers as secret Jesuits (Whitlark, *Illuminated Fantasy* 82). Some exposers of “conspiracy” made similar charges seriously, e.g., Charles Louis Cadet-Gassicour’s *Le tombeau de Jacques Molay ou le secret des conspirateurs, a ceux qui veulent tout savoir...* (1796). It deems Price a Jesuit dupe or agent (Roberts 180). Despite Burke’s *Reflections*’ emphasizing his own “zeal” as a Protestant (104), both Thomas Paine and Mary Wollstonecraft, in their replies to it, imply that his conservatism is ultimately Catholic. The anti-Dissenter, Birmingham riot of 1789 came partly because the Dissenter Priestley had written about laying gunpowder under superstition – superstition being one of those catchwords for crypto-Catholicism. His language, however, reminded Anglicans of the Roman Catholic terrorist Guy Fawkes, so the rioters assumed that the Dissenters would



likewise try to bomb Parliament (Brown 78-80). Conflation of the enemies of Anglicanism with one another continued for decades as in Edward Coxe's verses (1805):

To make the wrong appear the right,

And keep our rulers in;

In Walpole's time, 'twas Jacobite,

In Pitt's tis Jacobin! (Quoted in Pittock ix)

Logically, one might presume that, in *The Monk*, the mob which attacks the abbess, is either a satire of an earlier age's Spanish Catholics (as it purports to be) or of Jacobins contemporary with Lewis. Since Catholics were the alleged precursors of the Jacobins, both may be the subject, as I have argued elsewhere, but this merely shows why the Inquisition was again topical (Whitlark "Heresy Hunting...". Lewis sets *The Monk* during that period as a standard object of Protestant polemics and Gothic horror, e.g., William Godwin's *St. Leon*. Despite almost obsessive use of Catholicism for local color, *The Monk*, however, shows only a superficial understanding of Catholic doctrines and practices, as with Lewis's conflating friars and monks – a common imprecision in the literature of the time. Indeed, the book is a microcosm of British prejudices and misinformation, not a detailed *roman à clef* of Lewis's age.

If one does not look closely, its bigotry seems to treat Catholicism merely as the Other. It is mysterious, conspiratorial, diabolical. Today, literary critics find this vaguest level of prejudice the easiest to envision; thus, the word "Other" has become jargon. It is sometimes coupled with attempts to find rational explanations for anti-Catholicism e.g., the industrialization of the Armagh weavers, which probably intensified competition between the Anglo-Irish and the indigenous population. The No-Popery pamphlets of the times, however, do not read like the tracts of Marxists but of mental patients. They have many specific names for Catholicism, but "Other" is not one of them. Study of the late eighteenth century shows the climate of intolerance from which they arose, but, just as actual weather is ever changing and unpredictable, persecution had an amorphousness that keeps its record outside of the novels from being a very helpful guide to them, especially since they are usually set in pre-eighteenth-century periods.

#### **From Previous Psychological Interpretations to a Developmental Approach**

If, for the most part, the history of eighteenth-century persecution cannot be correlated in much, clear detail to prejudices in novels contemporary to it, has psychology been more useful? Because of the present vogue of neo-Freudian criticism, anti-Catholic stereotypes in the gothic works have largely been seen in terms of repressed attitudes, especially toward parental imagoes. Anne Williams's *Art of Darkness*, for instance, argues that, in *The Monk*, the Catholic Church is "a kind of institutional Terrible Mother"

(Williams 117). She continues with an equation of the female with "horror" and an implied comparison of dungeon murders with the womb. Almost the converse, Maggie Kilgour's *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*, also published in 1995, reads Catholicism and its chief embodiment, Ambrosio, in terms of the theme of the *protective* mother. "Lewis... suggests that Ambrosio's perverted development... is due to his lack of a mother" (146). As surrogate mother, that Church, according to Kilgour, is overly protective and untrustworthy, but lacks the extreme terror and horror that Williams ascribes to it. Further afield, in her *Sexual Personae*, Camille Paglia contends: "Protestant rationalism is defeated by Gothic's return to the ritualism and mysticism of medieval Catholicism, with its residual paganism" (265). While Kilgour's and William's psychoanalysis understand Lewis as strongly or mildly attacking Catholicism (based on his presumed attitudes toward his own mother), Paglia's sees the writers of gothic works as closet Catholics, who really want to be pagans, since even more deeply they would break free from civilized rationalism and its sexual restraints. Still other psychoanalysis of *The Monk* interpret its Catholic monasticism by focusing on Lewis's presumed homosexuality. As with attempts to correlate the novels with a chronology of persecution, previous psychological readings have had contradictory emphases and lacked very detailed discussion of specific prejudices.

Consequently, I am advocating not just another competing version of Freudian psychoanalysis but an application of principles sufficiently uncontroversial so that they appear in disparate psychological schools. Throughout many of these, a basic understanding is that the process of human maturation is difficult; therefore earlier stages of emotional and cognitive development persist and continue to cause difficulties after being partly outgrown. According to Freud, there is perennial danger of regression to the "oral," "anal," or "Oedipal." Similarly, Lacan attributes many psychological problems to the "Imaginary." For Jung, "archetypes" link individuals to earlier stages in the development of the species – an idea anticipated by Freud's "primitive vestiges." Scholarship on Gothic literature already routinely connects threatening imagery of the past (e.g., haunted, moldering castles and ancient beings lurking in the darkness) with return of repressed stages of personal or human development. Thus, what is least controversial is that the gothic works evoke immaturity.

The point of this essay is that in imagining a religion different from their own, people habitually identify the alien faith with low stages of development. Thus, *The Monk*, tends to classify "superstition" (i.e., Medieval beliefs associated by Protestants with Roman Catholicism) as "puerile" (349) or "childish" (349-350). Ambrosio's villainy is repeatedly blamed on his Roman Catholic education (e.g. 237-239). One of the enduring

charms of the book is that Lewis provides valid psychological insights into spiritual immaturity. He makes these more palatable by projecting them into a Catholic past, so that his readers might learn from them while still feeling a pleasant sense of superiority. Today, however, the book should be taught as a fantasy diagnosing the foibles of Lewis and other Anglicans indirectly, not a direct and accurate portrait of Spanish Roman Catholicism. Whatever Lewis's intentions or the assumptions of his first readers, an honest use of the book must unravel his psychological insights from denominational prejudices. Religious bias finds its insidious way even into academic discourse (as with the already-mentioned Pittock and Bowen).

In arriving at a developmental, psychological approach, one must be careful to avoid such biases, from which psychologists have not been immune. Most notorious was G. Stanley Hall, who theorized that each individual recapitulates the development of the human race from fetishism to Christian love. This theory is so obviously ethnocentric that it has slipped from fashion. However, the tendency to label others' religions as juvenile is seductive. Even into the nineteen-nineties, F.K. Oser has identified the third of his five stages of individual religious development with Deism. To Freud's atheism, all religions constituted states of immaturity.

The idea that a religion might represent a frozen stage of development should be suspect. As has been shown by Jean Piaget and those who have corroborated his work, each individual matures through a series of cognitive states. Their pace and manifestation may be slightly more variable than Piaget first assumed, but their existence seems well testified, for instance, in David Elkind's study of religious development in Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic children. Corroborative application of Piaget's work to religion began in the 1960s with Ronald Goldman. More recent exploration of religious/cognitive development has come from the psycholinguistics of A.G. McGrady, R.J.L. Murphy, and N. Slee, but with important names in between, notably James Fowler, M.J. Meadow, and R.D. Kahoe.

Consequently, many (perhaps all) religions are likely to contain the highest (i.e., adult) stage of development. Take, for instance, children's rise from concrete to abstract thinking. In religious terms, this is from idolatry (the Divine considered concrete) to non-idolatrous worship. In Catholicism, idolatry is avoided by distinguishing between *aulia* (reverence given to an image) and *latría* (worship given to God, who transcends representation). In Protestantism, idolatry is avoided by reducing the number of icons and the ceremonies of reverence to them. Moslems virtually eliminate representational religious art. Thus, Protestantism may seem idolatrous to Islam, and Catholicism to Protestantism, yet adult worship in each faith has outgrown a childish limitation to concrete

thinking. Similarly, to Moslem and Christian missionaries, Hindu veneration of images has appeared idolatrous, even though Vedanta goes further from the concrete and material than either of those faiths. Unable or unwilling to respect spiritual variety, eighteenth-century Anglicanism tended to classify the "Romish superstition" as puerile. Nonetheless, in studies by Greer (1981) and Hoge and Petrillo (1978), Roman Catholics actually scored higher than Protestants of J.H. Peatling's measure of religious maturity. This, of course, does not mean that in some absolute sense Catholics are more mature. Personality tests also may exhibit cultural bias. The point is that people generally use their own standards of maturity for others who aspire to different, equally viable measures of adulthood. Naturally, as Piaget himself noted, not every individual matures to the highest level offered by his or her tradition. (Indeed, one might suspect that those who are having the greatest difficulty developing are the most likely to project their own difficulties onto members of other traditions, i.e., voice prejudices against them).

Piaget's paradigm of development is from concrete to abstract, undifferentiated to differentiated, literalism to linguistic sophistication, and magic to realism. Based primarily on the first three of these, M.J. Meadow and R.D. Kahoe define mature religious attitudes as (1) "avoidance of idolatries," (2) "mature conscience and values," and (3) "acceptance of human foibles." As already mentioned, "idolatry" is the Christian term for the concretization of the spiritual. The maturing of conscience and values requires "differentiation" in Piaget's terminology, while acceptance of human foibles arises from larger experience and a more sophisticated understanding of language (in contrast to a child's interpreting rules very literally). These three, mature attitudes number among those British Protestants have consistently claimed Roman Catholics lack. As to magical thinking, it has been an additional charge against Catholics, particularly in connection with transubstantiation and belief in many more miracles than are mentioned in the Bible. Legends of Roman Catholic priests indulging in sorcery have also adorned some Protestant polemics.

"Idolatry" corresponds to James Fowler's "Mythic-Literal Stage," which he associates with Piaget's "Concrete Operational" phase and locates in the elementary-school years. A major Protestant charge has been that Catholic reverence for saints (and charismatic priests popularly classed with the former) leads to a sinful perpetuation of this immaturity. Ambrosio is called the "idol" of Madrid. He has become thus both to his congregation and, in his arrogance, to himself as well. He also practices other idolatries. For instance, his reverence for the Virgin Mary (a devotion particularly denounced by Protestants) is so extreme that, in a dream, he makes love to a painting of her: "He pressed his lips to hers, and found them warm; The animated form started from the Canvas,

embraced him affectionately, and his senses were unable to support delight so exquisite" (67). The picture turns out to be that of a demon. (Christians have regularly charged that idolatry is really devil worship). She seduces him through flattery "approaching idolatry" (67) as when she calls him a "divinity" and the "idol of my heart" (83).

Although Mariolatry is the most prominent "idolatry" charged against Catholics, Protestants find all non-Biblical saints suspicious. Stressing their number comically, Lewis cites Saints Jago, Barbara, Francis, Agatha, Clare, Anthony, Denis, Benedict, Rasolio, Ursula, Lucia, Catherine, and Genevieve, some of them repeatedly. Several characters, including the demon, call Ambrosio one. Among the devices that make saints particularly noticeable is that much of the action centers around their images. The picture of the Madonna dominates scenes of devotion until Ambrosio finally tears it to shreds in disillusionment and apostasy. This embodies what British Protestants consider the basic Catholic pattern: being kept at a childish level until, when Catholics outgrow it, they find nothing in their religion to accommodate them and thus may lose Christianity altogether. (This is part of the Jacobite-to-Jacobin stereotype already noted.)

Consequently, saints' images are shown either being virtually worshipped or conspicuously profaned. In the opening scene, an impious throng sit on St. Francis and St. Mark, while "St. Agatha found herself under the necessity of carrying double" (36). Fornicating lovers use "a colossal statue of St. Francis" as the depository for their correspondence (54). Lorenzo conceals himself behind it to eavesdrop (55).

Mischievously, Theodore tells nuns that he lost an eye by opening it during the dressing of a statue of the Virgin in her regalia: "The glory which surrounded the Virgin was too great to be supported. I hastily shut my sacrilegious eye, and never have been able to unciose it since" (282). In their childish credulity, they believe this tale, which, by Protestant standards, is inherently idolatrous. Such a blinding glory is usually ascribed alone to the sight of God. Certainly, an appearance of naivete pervades the later scene where Antonia kneels before "a statue of St. Rosalia, her patroness" and chants a "Midnight Hymn," seemingly to the image as the representative of heaven.

Reliques also receive their share of satire. The hypocrite Ambrosio is so much the "idol" of Madrid that even his broken rosary is venerated: "Whoever became possessor of a bead, preserved it as a sacred relique; and had it been the chaplet of thrice-blessed St. Francis himself, it could not have been disputed with greater vivacity" (46). When Ambrosio visits the convent of St. Clare: "He was paraded through the garden, shewn all the reliques of saints and martyrs, and treated with as much respect and distinction as the Pope himself" (322). The credulous nuns shower the dissembler Theodore with what they hold most precious: "some brought reliques of saints, waxen images, and consecrated

crosses; and others presented him with pieces of those works in which the religious excel... All these he was advised to sell, in order to put himself into better case; and he was assured that it would be easy to dispose of them, since the Spaniards hold the performance of nuns in high estimation" (287).

The climactic exposure of idolatry occurs during the burning of the Abbey. The nuns cower by a statue of St. Clare, as if it could protect them. They inform Lorenzo that it still holds the skeletal hand of a thief, who – miracle of miracles – could not pry himself loose from where he profaned the stone. Lorenzo, however, discovers that the abbess invented this "miracle" and had a skeletal hand placed there to conceal the entrance to a hidden room. Therein, Agnes languishes in cruel imprisonment. The contrast is between the idolatry of the nuns and the duplicity of the abbess, who, having outgrown their childishness, went not to a higher spiritual stage but to hypocrisy (as Protestants presumed was typical of Catholic prelates).

Idolatry correlates with Lacan's "Imaginary," i.e., young children's thinking in emotionally charged images before they can speak. To this Lacan contrasts the "Symbolic," i.e., language, which permits a more nuanced and controlled approach to reality. Protestantism charged Catholicism with over emphasizing the visual: saints' processions, elaborate rituals, maudlin pictures, crucifixes – all supposedly tinged with idolatry. Before the Protestant Reformation, the Church worried that if the untrained read the Bible, it might lead them into sin; thus, there were various restrictions on Bible reading. This inspired the Protestant accusation that Catholicism was trying to keep its followers tractable children, entertained with pretty shows instead of educated with language. Antonia's mother writes for her an expurgated Bible – an extreme version of the allegedly Catholic attitude. Naturally, villainous and tyrannical Ambrosio approves. So extreme was Protestant aversion to the very idea of an expurgated Bible that Lewis was blamed for even mentioning such a notion.

As to "conscience and values," Ambrosio's morals are in a more deplorable state than his theology. At the "Mythic-Literal Stage" (when God seems idolatrously concrete), a child is at least expected to understand fairness and reciprocity. Later stages further differentiate conscience, adding awareness of interpersonal expectations, societal rules, roles, laws, procedural justice, and finally universal care. Although, on a very external level, Ambrosio maintains a holy role, his own emotions rise no higher than thoughts of "punishment-reward," Fowler's "Intuitive-Projective" (aligned to Piaget's "Pre-operational" level). Often, Ambrosio behaves at Fowler's still lower "Primal" stage: trying to intuit standards when cognition is at Piaget's "Sensory-motor" level. Appropriate

to his sensuousness, the book ends with Ambrosio in an infantile immobility, undergoing extreme sensory torture – the result of his spiritual movement backwards.

The start of this decline was “vanity,” a vice Lewis describes as “childish” (175). Victor Sage writes, “There are ... (according to stereotype, for Catholics) no conscious, no *internal* checks on spiritual pride. The self of a Catholic, to the Protestant imagination, is not approachable; it does not exist in the body, but elsewhere (i.e., in the ecclesiastical institution)” (Sage 38). British Protestants charged that reliance on “priestcraft” kept the individual worshippers from internalizing values and developing a mature conscience. Instead they looked to confession and other rituals of the church to bestow a religious life on them from the outside. Confession is a *leitmotif* throughout the book. “(Ambrosio) was named confessor to all the chief families in Madrid; and no one was counted fashionable who was in joined penance by any other than (he)” (240). Nonetheless, Leonella remarks, “Were he my confessor, I should never have the courage to avow one half of my peccadilloes, and then I should be in a rare condition!” (48). This foreshadows Agnes’s making a “feigned (i.e., incomplete) confession” to him (71). Whether Catholics entrust all to the magic of the priest or damn themselves through the equally childish trick during that sacred office, they supposedly fell to develop maturely differentiated consciences. Similarly, Papal sale of dispensations drew Protestant ire. Lewis alludes to that issue when Don Cristoval boasts “my uncle’s credit at the court of Rome would ... obtain for my mistress a dispensation from her vows” (188). Protestants particularly distrusted the power that confession and dispensation gave clerics. Exemplary of this, Ambrosio profanes his role as confessor by making it part of his planned seduction of Antonia. He also violates if not its letter, at least its spirit, when, in the midst of confessions, he betrays the confidence he finds in Agnes’s letter. Whether or not these ecclesiastics are modeled on Lewis’s own parental imagoes, they embody perennial fear of being kept at a childish level.

As to learning “acceptance of human foibles,” the Protestant allegation was that Catholic standards were so impossibly high that they prevented the development of sound, realistic morals. This is quite explicitly the case for Ambrosio. The monks who raised him are said to have “painted to him the torments of the Damned in colours the most dark, terrible, and fantastic, and threatened him at the slightest fault with eternal perdition” (237). Protestants further admonished that Catholic ethics were perverse in creating sins unknown to the Bible such as abandoning celibacy or eating meat on Friday. As imposed continence, Ambrosio’s monastic vows make him more vulnerable to the devil’s wiles. Lewis’s anti-Catholic satire also includes the stock, comic, old Catholic woman Jacintha, who “tell(s) her” beads four times a day, and observ(es) every fast prescribed by the

Calendar" (321). There is, of course, much criticism of Catholic asceticism, e.g., "She painted in their true colours the numerous inconveniences attached to a convent, the continued restraint, the low jealousies, the petty intrigues, the servile court and gross flattery expected by the superior" (379).

Denied knowledge even by the expurgation of her Bible, Antonia typically prays:

Yet may not my unconscious breast  
Harbour some guilt to me unknown?  
Some wish impure, which unrepent  
You blush to see, and I to own (254)

In ignorance and repression, Antonia is kept from understanding her maturing body. Such ignorance makes her more vulnerable to Ambrosio.

Despite his own weakness, he childishly lacks tolerance of others' foibles. This is clearly seen when he fails to save the pregnant nun from the pitiless abbess, but even more strongly when he falls out of love with Matilda on learning that she is an unscrupulous as he. This fall prepares for his attempted seduction and rape of Antonia, who proves to be his own sister. By this extreme result, *The Monk* emphasizes that lack of "acceptance of human foibles" brings abominable crimes, when long suppressed instincts break forth. Such acceptance should have been learned during what Fowler terms the "Synthetic Conventional" stage (the first part of Piaget's "Formal Operational"). It is a time when "interpersonal expectations" modify the literalism of the previous stage. In monastic seclusion, however, Ambrosio has missed much opportunity for the interpersonal exchange that would have aided his development. According to common opinion, "he knows not in what consists the difference of man and woman" (44). Such ignorance is true of Antonia. Prudery leaves them unprepared to cope with the devil's wiles.

Intolerance is natural at the stage when a child interprets commands with unthinking literalness, unable to adapt them to circumstances. Recognizing the need to grow beyond this, St. Paul coined the distinction between letter and spirit. Expected to be at the latter stage, the Abbess, nonetheless, proclaims, "Agnes shall be the first to feel the rigour of those laws, which shall be obeyed to the very letter" (73).

Related to intolerance is the failure to discriminate real culpability from guilt by association. Perhaps the book's most powerful satire of this occurs when knowledge of the abbess's crimes inspires a crowd to attack not only her but also innocent nuns. While Lewis's sacrilegious crown ravage the convent, the roof collapses on them – allegory of the mindless intolerance of Catholics destroying itself.

As to magical thinking, from some perspectives all religion partakes of this. Bishop Berkeley, however, was fond of remarking that even some scientific ideas require as



much faith as religious ones. Ultimately, each culture distinguishes what is childish, magical thinking and what venerable tradition. Protestantism often condemned as the former various vestiges of the "Catholic" Middle Ages : belief in ghosts, exorcism, soothsaying, and witchcraft. Whatever the actual Catholic attitude toward ghosts, Protestants tended to assume that belief in them was tied to the doctrine of purgatory. Jacintha presumes that Elvira's ghost comes from purgatory (328). Similarly, the nuns say of a mysterious voice, "Doubtless, it proceeds from some Soul in pain, who wishes to be prayed out of purgatory: but not of us here dares to ask it the question" (362).

Interpreting those nuns' credulity poses no problem. The "ghost" is the living Agnes, hidden by the fraudulent miracle of the skeletal hand. However, there do seem to be other ghosts. The issue is the way these specters are nested in various characters' testimony. Take, for instance, the phantom of Antonia's mother. Jacintha testifies, ".... I was frightened enough, and began to say my avemaria: but the ghost interrupting me uttered three loud groans, and roared out in a terrible voice, 'Oh! That chicken's wing! My poor soul suffers for it.'" Boasting of having warned her about the dangers of eating meat on Friday, Jacintha is hardly a disinterested observer but relates this as proof of her own sagacity. Has Elvira risen from the grave with the double purpose of warning her daughter and complaining about a chicken wing? Lewis can hardly be asking an Anglican readership to believe that anyone suffers in purgatory for disobeying Catholic dietary rules. If, however, Jacintha's testimony is discredited, then Antonia's perception of her mother's spirit seems likely to be a subjective experience. Comic details intrude similarly in the tale of the Bleeding Nun, recounted by a character suffering from a major accident and long sickness, thus, not entirely a trustworthy narrator. That ghost dies in the midst of mortal sins, without a moment's repentance, yet, beyond the grave, when she should know better, hopes masses may save her soul – a parody of the Catholic notion of prayers for the faithful departed. If the Bleeding Nun is to be doubted, then the exorcisms of her with Catholic paraphernalia also recede to the level of legend. The witchcraft in *The Monk* is all the work of the devil, a being in whom Anglicans generally still believed, so, from a Protestant point of view, it does not necessarily involve childish, magical thinking.

The gypsy soothsayer is another problem. She is introduced with the description, "in her hand she bore a long black rod, with which she at intervals traced a variety of singular figures upon the ground, round about which she danced in all the eccentric attitudes of folly and delirium" (59). This hardly sounds like a recommendation. On hearing Antonia's aunt express strong dislike of gypsies, the soothsayer pretends to prophesy but actually delivers a string of insults for which she need not foresee the future. Finally, though, she speaks the accurate (albeit vague) prophecy that a proud, lustful man

will destroy Antonia. Given the latter's vulnerability and the number of proud, lustful men in Lewis' Madrid, this prediction may require no preternatural skill.

Nevertheless, Lewis does not explain away the supernatural definitively in the manner of Radcliffe. The psychological understanding of repression is that earlier stages of development remain partly attractive. To the extent that they are projected on Catholicism, they lead the Protestant reader to nostalgia for a simpler past. Even Radcliffe slips into this sentiment, e.g., in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794):

As she listened, the mid-night hymn of the monks rose softly from a chapel, that stood on one of the lower cliffs, an holy strain, that seemed to ascend through the silence of night to heaven, and her thoughts ascended with it (Radcliffe 47).

As inspiration for the protagonist's meditation, Catholic ritual forms part of legitimate spirituality (though Radcliffe's use of the word "seemed" signals a reservation). Also in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, one reads :

The holy conversation of the friar ... soothed the violence of her grief, and lifted her heart to the Being, who, extending through all place and all eternity, looks on the events of this little world as on the shadows of a moment, and beholds equally, and in the same instant, the soul that has passed the gates of death, and that, which still lingers in the body. (82)

This is not Protestant, evangelical activism, but a mystical retreat into the Eternal, the reader one with the medieval past. Radcliffe's nostalgia for Catholicism, however, does not exclude the anti-Catholicism so often discovered in the novel (e.g., Sage 32; Geary 56). Rather, the Gothic genre requires finding some appeal in the monastic past, but with a Protestant shudder at old superstitions – a gesture even-more apparent in Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1797), whose villain, Schedoni, is a Dominican. Lewis's tone is less clear, his narrator sometimes adopting the perspectives of characters and sometimes commenting from an eighteenth-century, Protestant perspective. This accentuates ambivalence but does not keep *The Monk* from overflowing with anti-Catholic satire.

It is part of its age, the close of a century. The educational paradigm that dominated the Enlightenment meant that endings might seem like the time before examinations and judgements. Coupled with Christian millenarianism this brought a rush of pamphlets with the Pope as "Anti-Christ," "The Great Beast," or "Scarlet Woman." From the Spanish Armada to IRA terrorism, no century's end has lacked British turmoil over Catholicism. During the 1790s, fugitive, French aristocrats immigrated with their Faith as suspect baggage and Irish Catholics campaigned more openly for suffrage, while the English feared Irish rebellion. Considering Catholicism the precondition that made the French Revolution and Terror inevitable, Anglicans expanded anti-Papist rhetoric to new

targets. Burke, though, despite his Protestant “zeal,” approved the protection of British Catholics against riots and hosted French émigré Catholic clergy (Burke 104 and 97). Indeed, there was amid fear of Papal incursion also movement toward religious toleration, especially as an alliance of Christian denominations against atheism.

As Hillel Schwartz has demonstrated, many centuries’ conclusions have borne a family resemblance to one another in apocalyptic chaos. As Complexity Theory shows, even chaos has some shape, arrayed around focuses called “strange attractors,” since they at least appear to attract because of the confused movement around them. In Protestant England, one of these was the dream/nightmare of Roman Catholicism. Religious fantasy was heresy, which, to Protestants, brought to mind Catholicism. Consequently, anti-Catholic polemics overrun the chief fantasy genre of the late eighteenth century: Gothic novels. The novels’ attitude toward the Old Faith evidences as much ambivalence as another *fin-de-siecle* work, *Hamlet* (ca. 1600), whose protagonist, schooled in Protestant Wittenberg, confronts a ghost from Catholic purgatory.

With the Bleeding Nun and Jacintha’s chicken wing, Lewis is playing, yet playing can be educational – half-serious re-examination of previous stages of thought. Near the close of a century, many of his contemporaries were doing the same: seeing how far their civilization had come, with the Gothic as a marker of its childhood. Lewis is acutely aware of himself as still young and developing. *The Monk’s* “Preface” apologizes, “I scarce have seen my twentieth year.” According to Walter Scott, he was always “boyish” – a diminutiveness Lewis mentions in his “Preface” (quoted in Lewis 19). When he was charged with blasphemy, he excused himself to his father by saying that when he wrote the book he was still immature and had grown up much since then. His seeing the book’s treatment of religion in terms of the dichotomy maturity/immaturity is a clue as to his attitude toward it. He wrote it at the end of his teens and while occupying his first adult employment. Being a mere sinecure procured through his father, that position offered no opportunity for him to prove himself. Consequently, as his letters testified, he felt bored. He switched his attention to various projects of authorship, ways to attain adult income and status. Lewis was striving to display what he had learned of the mature values; and, as he later testified, even at nineteen his religious judgement was not yet ripe. He dedicated his literary efforts to his mother (Lewis 18). As we have seen, this closeness to her has been interpreted in many ways, but the diverse psychological approaches agree in implying his difficulty extricating himself from childhood. His individual problems obliquely mirrored his characters, and his society had its own analogues. The growth of the bourgeoisie was increasing the number of years that the upwardly mobile spent in the adolescence of formal schooling. Burke congratulated Britain on maintaining a “Gothic

and monkish education" system, but younger Englishmen may have felt as tempted to violate its compulsory celibacy as was Ambrosio in his,

If Lewis had recast the worries and desires of his time into a fantasy of Atlantean religion, the result would now seem more politically correct, but it might not have survived the centuries. One of the book's attractions has been its controversial, maliciously exciting assault on Catholicism. Today, though, readers may best use its *Bildungsroman* of damnation as opportunity to meditate on prejudice itself. The above, developmental approach to the book can guide readers to find analogies with their own struggles to mature. Seen in these general terms, Lewis's insights into vanity and other childishness have enduring value. Alas, the practice of labeling one's own temptations to regress as "Catholicism" (or some other, unpopular faith) also shows signs of having a very long future.

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Texas Tech. University

# Sketching A Crocodile On Water Or Speech, Silence And Self-realisation In Jñānadeva\*

VIDYUT AKLUJKAR

I feel honoured to have been asked to speak on Jñānadeva (1275-1296 c.e) in front of this learned congregation. When I was pondering upon a topic worthy of this occasion, I felt as if I was walking through a used-car lot reading brightly painted signs on good-looking but used cars. I saw many well-worn topics rush to greet me, loudly proclaiming "Pick me! Choose Me! Try me!" These were topics such as the life<sup>1</sup> and literature<sup>2</sup> of Jñānadeva, the Bhagavad Gītā and Jñāneśvarī<sup>3</sup>, the philosophy of Cidvilāsa in the Anubhavāmṛta<sup>4</sup> of Jñānadeva, the glory of Marathi manifest in the Jñāneśvarī, Jñānadeva and Śaṅkara, Jñānadeva and Nāmadeva<sup>5</sup>, the myths and miracles of Jñānadeva<sup>6</sup>, the significance of Jñānadeva in the 20<sup>th</sup> century<sup>7</sup> and so on. Since many excellent scholars in Marathi and a few in English have already written a lot on each one of these topics, I felt disinclined to choose from them, and finally decided against picking any of the used lot. Instead, I decided to give you a taste of Jñānadeva's philosophy essentially as expressed by Jñānadeva, through his own inimitable style. Jñānadeva's style is a unique blend of poetry and philosophy, and it is impossible to talk about Jñānadeva's contribution to philosophical thought without fully understanding his style. Since in more than one ways, the style is the man, the task of understanding Jñānadeva's style is tantamount to addressing the basic paradox of Vedānta facing Jñānadeva. Is all communication about Brahman futile, destined to die while being created, like sketching a crocodile on water<sup>8</sup>? And if it is so, then how can one convey that which by definition is impossible to convey? Hence the title of today's talk.

While claiming that the mystic experience of oneness with Brahman is beyond speech, and beyond sense experience<sup>9</sup>, Jñānadeva engages in trying to convey that very experience to you through all your senses. His claim is as follows<sup>10</sup>:

"That which the vision cannot see, can be visualized without eyes, if one obtains the knowledge beyond sense-perception. The gold which even the alchemists cannot obtain, may be found right in the iron if suddenly the Philosopher's stone *parisu* comes in your hand. Similarly, when the good teacher graces you, what can you not achieve? Jñānadeva says, I am blessed with such an unlimited grace. For this reason, I shall speak. I shall manifest the form of the Formless through speech. Although it is beyond the senses I shall make you experience it through your senses."<sup>11</sup>

I propose to explore in this paper the literary strategies adopted by Jñānadeva in order to convey that which is impossible to convey. In the course of this inquiry I shall also address questions such as: How does Jñānadeva reconcile the basic paradox of communication from the view point of an enlightened soul? How does he define the territory of speech? Can a silent question be answered? Can eternal speech be silenced? Are speech and silence the twain that shall never meet or are they inseparable like Śiva and Śakti? Since this is a Vedānta conference, I can afford to take for granted a certain familiarity with the philosophical tenets of Vedānta and focus instead on their manifestation through Jñānadeva's poetic creations.

Before embarking on that journey, let me assemble the essentials. The Marathi tradition believes that Jñānadeva lived a short but extremely illustrious life of 21 years in the latter half of the 13<sup>th</sup> c. and by those calculations, this year, 1996, commemorates the 700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his *sañjivana samādhi*, or of the time he decided to end his sojourn among us<sup>12</sup>. Jñānadeva became silent in the year 1296 c. e. but his voice is never silenced. In that sense, his *samādhi* is called *sañjivana* or immortal.

In the history of Marathi language, literature and Bhakti in the social life of Maharashtra, Jñānadeva's position is unparalleled. He is rightly regarded the patron saint of Marathi literature and till this date. Serious literary performances in Maharashtra or in the Marathi community anywhere in the world end by chanting Jñānadeva's *pasāya-dāna ovis*, which form the gracious epilogue to his magnum opus, Jñānadevi. Jñānadeva was not the very first writer of Marathi. There were eminent earlier writers who had chosen Marathi as the language of their literary creations, writers such as Mukundarāja, (the author of *Vivekasindhu*) Narendra (the author of *Śisupāla-vadha*) and Dāmodara Bhaṭṭa (the author of *Rukmiṇī-svayamvara*). Although these have written celebrated works of story-poems or *ākhyāna-kāvyas*, Jñānadeva alone is credited with forming the identity of Marathi as a literary language capable of expressing the grand philosophy of Vedānta. In the social and religious life of Maharashtra his position is again foremost, as he is also considered to be the founder of the Vārkarī panth, a sect of Bhakti worship in Maharashtra, with a strong following of faithful pilgrims (vārkarī) from all walks of life without regard to caste or creed who visit Pandharpur twice a year. Three illustrious Sant poets, Nāmadeva, Ekanātha, and Tukārāma have built the edifice of Bhakti upon the foundations laid by Jñānadeva. Out of these three, Nāmadeva was a senior contemporary of Jñānadeva and is known to have travelled along with Jñānadeva and latter propagated the Bhāgavata philosophy all the way to Punjab. The earliest records of Jñānadeva's life and of his *samādhi* in 1296 come from Nāmadeva's poems. Ekanātha was the scholar sant who is credited with the first critically edited version of J's major work, *Jñānadevi*.

It may come as a surprise that all this fame of Jñānadeva who ended his life at 21, rests on essentially four works. These are [1] Jñānadevi,<sup>13</sup> which is a work of about 9000 verses in the loosely built *ovimeter* of Marāṭhi, and can be described as a profoundly philosophical and extremely

elegant story-poem set in the framework of a commentary on the *Bhagavad Gītā*[2] *Anubhavāmṛta*, an original work of Advaita philosophy in 800 *ovī* verses which gives expression to the mystic experience of bliss of Jñānadeva, [3] *Cāṅgadeva Pāsaṭhi* which is in the form of a letter composed in sixty-five *ovīs* written by young Jñānadeva to an aged yogin called Cāṅgadeva<sup>14</sup>, explaining the riddled status of communication after having attained the highest knowledge of Brahman, and [4] *Abhaṅgas*, including *Hari-pāṭha*, a collection of several lyrics in the *abhaṅga* style which are poetic offerings to God Viṭhobā of Pandharpur. Of these four, the first two are more or less critically edited, but the latter two have come down to us through various oral traditions and exist in the oral repertoire of the *vārkarī* pilgrims and in several editions printed for the edification of scholars.

If I am asked to summarize Jñānadeva's philosophy in one word, the word "synthesis" immediately comes to mind. This is a password for grasping Jñānadeva's philosophy in all its aspects. There are not one but several blends of apparently contrasting tenets of different schools or sects in the poetic philosophy manifest in Jñānadeva's works. There is a blend of *Śaiva* and *Vaiṣṇava* principles in his teachings, there is a mixture of Śankara's *Kevalādvaita*, along with homage to some doctrines of *Kāśhmīr Śaivism* in his exposition of Vedānta, there is a heritage of *Nāṭha paṭhī* yogic practices learned from his elder brother and teacher Nivṛttināṭha, coupled with his family heritage of Bhāgavata dharma or Bhakti of Viṭhobā of Pandharpur. The synthesis of philosophical doctrines is mirrored in a style of exposition that is also a model of synthesis. There is a happy wedding of poetry and philosophy in all his works not to mention the linguistic coupling of Sanskrit and Marathi at the opening of his *Anubhavāmṛta*. His diction exhibits a unique blend of learned Sanskrit *śāstric* vocabulary along with dynamic vernacular imagery. The choice of the flexible four-partite *ovī* meter for most of his works also reflects the harmonious synthesis of prose narrative with the fluidity and sonority of lyrical poetry<sup>15</sup>. All in all, Jñānadeva seems to be deliberately bringing together potentially contrasting elements to create a paradoxical fabric to timeless philosophy.

The paradox facing Jñānadeva is the paradox of a living liberated soul, a *Jīvanmukta*. In fact, it generates a series of vexing questions about the nature of human interaction in the face of unity with Brahman. If the triad of the subject, object and process dissolves with the advent of knowledge of Brahman, then how does such an enlightened soul function in public life? Does he end up in silence to remain rooted in that union with Brahman or does he talk, teach, converse and communicate? If, in keeping with our experience, he must engage in such dualistic behaviour, until the time for his final departure, then how do we understand the essential nature of such a behaviour? And lastly, if liberation is bliss, then what prompts a living-liberated person to be engaged in such mundane activities as talking, teaching, explaining?

I shall start with the last question first. Having realised the oneness with Brahman, what prompts him to communicate? Jñānadeva gives two reasons. The first is psychological, the second,



ethical. These are, first, unbearability of loneliness and second, generosity of the blessed souls. While paying a tribute to his own teacher Nivṛttināth, Jñānadeva says, "Loneliness is not easy to bear. Therefore by using an excuse of a disciple, this (action of the teacher) is like the sight looking at itself all around."<sup>16</sup> In saying this Jñānadeva at once acknowledges a psychological need for communication felt by everyone as long as we exist in the world of duality, but at the same time, he shows the ontological awareness of the eternal oneness, and therefore, reminds us of the ultimate paradox involved in any such action. He uses an innovative linguistic analogy to further elucidate the paradoxical nature of such an enterprise. On the syntactic level, Jñānadeva says, it is like the very verb of looking behaving like a subject gazing at itself. This self-reflexivity of diction occurs again and again in Jñānadeva's exposition since it forms the framework of any action undertaken by the liberated person.

Besides breaking boredom, the other reason given by Jñānadeva for the urge to communicate is generosity of spirit and the essentially universal nature of that precious knowledge. In the concluding section of the *Anubhavamṛta*, Jñānadeva uses a series of questions to elaborate this point with the help of illustrations from Nature<sup>17</sup>. He says,

The lord guru Nivṛttirāya has blessed me by keeping his hand on my head. Now should I not remain silent and enjoy that bliss?

But when the Great Lord Maheśa gave the brilliant torch in the hands of the sun, did he not illuminate the entire universe in its lustre?

Is the nectar deposited in the Moon just for its own use? Or is the water given by the sea to the clouds only their own share?

The light of a lamp exists in order to light up the entire house. The entire space of the sky belongs to the world as well.

The ocean swells, due to the power of the Moon, or the Spring makes it so that the trees become generous.

Similarly, my own bliss is due to the divine generosity of my Guru, and there is nothing that I can claim as my own, or in my control.

Thus the urge to communicate, the need to share and the inherited generosity prompt the liberated person to engage in speech. But is it necessary for the listener to listen? Can he not gain the knowledge by silent meditation, entirely by himself? Does he need the Other? The Teacher? The Word? Jñānadeva's answer is "Yes and no". But instead of answering straight forwardly, he uses again a question and an illustration: "If we could see our face by turning our gaze backwards, would we have to seek the help of a mirror?"<sup>18</sup> Any such illustration that Jñānadeva uses goes on illuminating the subject at hand from more than one angle.

Let me explain. The most impossibility of seeing one's own face is conveyed at the outset in this analogy. Our eyes see only what is in front of them. If we could turn our gaze backwards, we

could see ourselves in our entirety. But we cannot. Knowing oneself is like gazing at one's own face. It is almost but not quite impossible. There is help at hand. There are, fortunately, mirrors in this world. Teachers are like mirrors. They help you see who you are. Speech is like a mirror. It manifests what there is. But what you see with the help of mirrors is nothing new, nor is it created because of the mirror. It is always there. The mirror simply aids your sight, makes your self-knowledge possible. If the mirror is broken, you are still the same. All these nuances of the mirror analogy are used by Jñānadeva at one time or another and anyone familiar with his works is reminded of those other contexts<sup>19</sup> as well. At the same time, in the present context, the irony of not being able to accomplish something simple like seeing yourself is also captured by way of this analogy. Seeing oneself should have been simple. After all, the subject and the object of this action of seeing is the same. It is not as if you have to see someone not present here and now. If you can touch yourself, you can hear yourself speak, why can't you see your own face without an external agent? The anomaly within the sphere of sense experiences is deliberately chosen by Jñānadeva to illustrate the incapacity of an unaided individual on the path of self-realisation. By using this illustration connected with sense and sense objects, it becomes easier to convey the theoretical simplicity and practical difficulty in knowing oneself. This is just one example of Jñānadeva's strategy of conveying to you through sense experience that which by definition, is beyond sense experience.

Having thus understood the need to communicate, and the necessity of communication for both the speaker and the listener, let us take the question of the adequacy of speech in the context of the knowledge of Brahman. The only mode of communication available to Jñānadeva is speech. How sufficient is this mode? Jñānadeva has no illusions. He has time and again described how inadequate speech is in the context of understanding the real nature of Brahman. In fact, the opening verse of his *Anubhavāmṛta* describes Brahman as "*yad akṣaramanākhyaḥ ānandam ajam avyayam*", that which is undiminishing, indescribable, bliss, unborn, and undying. Nevertheless, we keep using the terms such as "*sat, cit and ananda*" to describe Brahman. Jñānadeva is very clear about how such adjectives are to be taken. He cautions by saying that these adjectives are meaningful only as long as they eradicate the possibility of their negation in Brahman, but not in the ultimate sense. The mirror analogy again comes handy: "Just as having shown the face to the onlooker, the mirror can go aside, or after waking up a person, the one who did that job may go away, similarly, having shown the one which sees, to the one who saw, these words retire by the path of silence".<sup>20</sup>

The role of the words as mirror is also expressed in the following couplet:

Word, which is famous in reminding, is extremely useful. Is it not like a mirror that makes manifest that which is unmanifest?

What wonder is there that an onlooker may see because of the mirror? But thanks to this mirror (of speech) even the one who cannot see begins to see.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, Jñānadeva understands the role of speech as illuminating, indicating, and then subsiding in silence. At the same time, he also delineates its territory. Speech comes in only before and after the actual bliss, and that too, with a marked difference of attitude. In the actual event of experiencing Brahman, no ocean of words is sufficient nor they possible.<sup>22</sup> Since there is a unity of the experience, the experiencer and the object of experience, there is no place for words there. Jñānadeva uses a picturesque description of this ultimate state: “The *parā vāṇī* has devoured the entire denotational sphere of objects, it has drunk up all the denoting words and now it is sound asleep.”<sup>23</sup> When the *Parā vāṇī* or the last level of speech is stable, there is no occasion for any waves to arise in there, so how can there be any sound? Nor is there any necessity of speech in that ontological event. Jñānadeva uses day-to-day analogies to convey the futility of that enterprise and asks, “Can one wake up the one who is already awake? Does the one who is already satisfied come to sit at the dinner again? Is there any use of lamps when the Sun has arisen? When the field is ripe with crops, do we bring in the plough to that field?”<sup>24</sup>

Dṛṣṭānta or illustrations are also used effectively in the topic of Avidyā. All linguistic enterprise falls in the realm of Avidyā. Therefore, it is impossible to eradicate Avidyā by using speech in any manner. Jñānadeva illustrates this hypothesis by listing in quick succession a series of unlikely challenges. “If one thinks that Avidyā can be destroyed (by using speech,) then let him first peel the sky. Let him milk the goat at its throat. Let him await someone by looking on from the eye of the knee. Let him evaporate the evening and pulverize it. Let him grind the yawn to extract all its juice and mix it with laziness, and then serve the drink to a fatso. May he (who sets out to destroy Avidyā with words) return the water upstream, may he flip the shadow that falls down, may he joyfully weave ropes of wind. May he kill the bogeyman. May he fill the reflection in a sack. May he blissfully go on combing the hair on his palm. May he break the non-being of a pot, may he pluck the blossoms of the sky, and may he enjoy breaking the horn of a hare. May he make ink by burning camphor, or gather kohl on the flame of a diamond, or may he joyfully marry the offspring of an infertile woman. May he nurse the cakora birds of the nether worlds by the New moon, or fish for the creatures dwelling in a mirage.”<sup>25</sup> This brilliant mixture of both conventional and original analogies effectively translates the concept of impossibility.

Unlike other philosophers, Jñānadeva does not engage in lengthy logical discourses, nor does he use elaborate argumentation to prove his points. This does not mean that the essence of his teaching, or his doctrines, are not profound. It means that he has managed to manifest the subtle principle by flooding it in the light of his lucid and brilliant poetry. What could have been an experience of chewing cast-iron chick peas with tender teeth becomes more palatable and digestible due to Jñānadeva’s compassionate style. In describing the words of Śrī Kṛṣṇa as he unfolds the *Bhagavad Gītā*, Jñānadeva has described his own style as follows: “First flows out the affection. The letters follow in its path. The words appear later, first appears the grace.”<sup>26</sup> His style is more intimate,

more sensuous, and therefore more enjoyable. He is not out to convince you with a polemic, but conveys to you directly, through senses the essence of his own experience. At the same time, he is fully aware that conveying that experience is a mutual enterprise<sup>27</sup>, and the listener's role in it is of vital importance. Therefore, again and again, Jñānadeva reminds his listeners of that concentration which is essential for them to participate in that blissful self-experience<sup>28</sup>. Instead of advancing inferences or *anumāna*, he uses *upamāna* or similes, *rūpakas* or metaphors, and *dṛṣṭāntas* or illustrations and analogies. Other literary devices used are direct questions, addresses, challenges, synesthesia, and oxymorons.

The task of Jñānadeva is to convey through sense experience that which is beyond senses. So naturally synesthesia suggests itself as an appropriate figure of speech, since it involves a deliberate fusion or cross-matching of senses and sense-objects. Jñānadeva uses it in all its variations. In the sixth canto of his *Jñānadevī*, he describes his language as follows:

Listen. The juiciness of this speech is such that due to its attraction, the ears obtain tongues, and the senses start to quarrel with each other. By nature the word is the object of hearing, but the tongue will say, "this is our enjoyment." And the nose will feel, "it has the nature of fragrance." So wondrous is the beauty of form of this speech that seeing it the eyes are satiated and they exclaim, "Is this an open mine of beautiful forms?"<sup>29</sup>

Later on, Jñānadeva suggests similar reception of the speech of Śrī Kṛṣṇa by coupling synesthesia with erotic imagery:

That speech (of Śrī Kṛṣṇa) should be heard by the ears of mind, that word should be seen by the eye of the intellect, that should be exchanged by giving the mind in return. When the hands of concentration will take these words inside the heart, they will entertain the intellect of the connoisseurs.<sup>30</sup>

Jñānadeva further uses inversion of senses and sense objects, and the fusion of other dichotomous images to describe the experience of a *jīvanmukta*, a living-liberated person<sup>31</sup>:

Now the fragrance has become endowed with a nose, the hearing has obtained ears, and the eyes have gained mirrors. The fans are blowing because they have become wind, and the heads are sending out fragrance by being transformed into the campaka flower. The tongue itself has become full of juice, the sun itself is blossoming in the lotus, and the cakora bird has become the moon. The flowers have become the bees, the young women have become the youths, the one who is overcome by sleep has become his bed.

Such tactics highlight only the incapability of the existing language to capture the state of enlightenment. At the same time such unconventional descriptions succeed in conveying to the listener at least a taste of that immortal experience. In this context, Jñānadeva mentions the *candra-*

*śākhā-nyāya* or 'the rule of Moon and the branch' from the traditional Indian epistemology. If the crescent moon of the first night is hard to spot in the sky, then by pointing to the branch of a tree that appears next to that crescent you can facilitate the viewer's vision. However, the viewer himself should visualize the moon. In truth, J. admits that it is impossible to completely convey that state which he enjoys, "The world of the Word to describe our state has not ever been created. The vision that can see us stops being the vision." And yet, at least on one more occasion, Jñānadeva breaks his silence to answer an unwritten letter. I am now referring to the smallest work attributed to Jñānadeva called Cāṅgadeva *pasāṣṭhī*. Tradition tells us that this work of 65 ovi verses was written by Jñānadeva in reply to a letter sent him by Cāṅgadeva, otherwise known as Cāṅga Vaṭeśu, or Cāṅga Vaṭeśvara. Cāṅgadeva was a famous elderly *yogi* of unknown age, (some say 100, some 1400 years) and he had heard the fame of this child prodigy called Jñānadeva. Cāṅgadeva wanted to communicate with Jñānadeva and instead of coming directly to meet Jñānadeva, he decided to write a letter. Somehow he was stumped at the very beginning. How should he address Jñānadeva? Granted that Cāṅgadeva was an older person, should he write blessings to Jñānadeva or given the fact that Jñānadeva was enlightened and thereby on a more advanced level than himself, should Cāṅgadeva write salutations to Jñānadeva? The question remained unresolved. So finally Cāṅgadeva simply sent a blank letter to Jñānadeva in the hands of his disciples, and waited. When the letter was received, the story tells us, that Jñānadeva's younger sister Muktā bāi laughed out loud, and said, "Although he has lived for so many years, he has remained blank." But Jñānadeva sensed an aspirant's dilemma in that blank letter, he understood the sincerity of the need to communicate and the hesitancy in subscribing to either mode of conventional communication. Jñānadeva also took it as an indication that the land was ripe for sowing the seeds of knowledge. Speech here had understood its limitations and had ended in silence. Therefore, Jñānadeva replied in sixty five verses to that silent question.

Cāṅgadeva *pasāṣṭhī* is like the cream on top of Jñānadeva's *Anubhavāmṛta*. In it Jñānadeva sums up his philosophy of Advaita Vedānta and Cidvilāsa which is essentially based on his own experience of oneness with the universe. Each one of its *ovis* is so terse and so full of implications, that it will take many words to fully explain even one. I shall dwell on a few just enough to show something of the philosophical personality of Jñānadeva and the greatness of that mind that still speaks to its audiences. He addresses his reply with the phrase "svasti Śrī Vaṭeśu". The name Vaṭeśu is the name of the deity Cāṅgadeva worshipped, and also the name which he had attached to his own. Rather than invoking his customary names of Gods such as Śiva or Viṣṇu, Jñānadeva starts with the name Cāṅgadeva prefers, thereby making his reader attentive and open to receive, and then proceeds to point out the oneness of that name Śiva and then, in the manner of his earlier work, *Anubhavāmṛta*, Jñānadeva embarks upon Śiva's paradoxical activity of creation and dissolution

of this universe. In fact, in that first *ovī* J. accomplishes much more than that. It reads,  
स्वस्ति श्री वटेशु । जो लपोनि जगदामासु । दावी मग यासु । प्रगटला करी ॥१॥

It can be literally translated as follows:

Blessings to Śrī Vateṣu, the one who hides to reveal the apparition of the universe, and then devours it by appearing.

Understandably, it is full of the usual contradictions. Cāṅgadeva is addressed by the name of his deity here. Jñānadeva addresses the worshipper with the name of his God, Śrī Vateṣu, but this is not the usual respectful invocation. Instead of writing salutations to the deity, blessings are given to the deity, and there by to the elderly Cāṅgadeva in the word *svastī*. And if that is not enough, the same reader, Cāṅgā vateṣu, is attributed the cosmic task of creation and dissolution of the entire universe. The reader becomes so absorbed by this successive unification of the reader, the writer, and the deities of either, that the next contradiction of the hide and seek of the ultimate achieving the opposite result in the manifestation and dissolution of the universe seems pale by comparison. When such an *ovī* is finally fully understood, one marvels at these miracles of expression packed to the brim in the metrical miniature, and the conversational mode dissolves in pensive silence. Leading the listener or the reader towards that silence is precisely the goal of Jñānadeva's speech.

Throughout his writings Jñānadeva has preferred the conversational mode of communication. The very first work he chose to write on was the conversation between the divine speaker and the most eligible listener, Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna. In his *Anubhavāmṛta*, Jñānadeva speaks directly to you of his own intimate experience and you witness his mastery of the conversational mode. In his *abhangas* he speaks to God Viṭṭhala. And in Cāṅgadeva *pāsaṣṭhī*, he speaks to Cāṅgadeva, but not just to Cāṅgadeva. I can here him speak to you and me through the *ovīs* written 700 years ago. While talking to the listener at hand, Jñānadeva also talks beyond time and space. He talks by using illustrations of sense experience, he uses self-reflexivity to remind us of the essential paradox of action, he also talks of the universality of his own experience, and he invariably draws you into that experience. Therefore, his poetry forever celebrates the touch of the Ultimate principle<sup>32</sup> which transforms it from the sphere of mere speech elevating it into an experience of bliss. I would like to end my exposition with the ending of Cāṅgadeva *pāsaṣṭhī* since in it, Jñānadeva sums up all the points I have been discussing so far. Consider what Jñānadeva says,<sup>33</sup>

Cāṅgadeva, you are the son of that same Vateṣu. Just as a lump of camphor.  
Listen to this conversation between you and me, listen to the speech of the self.  
Says Jñānadeva, for you to listen to my speech is like a palm of a hand embracing  
its own surface.

It is like the speech listening to itself, it is like the taste tasting itself, like the lustre visualizing itself.

It is like the gold testing itself, like the face becoming its own mirror, that is how, O Cakrapāṇi<sup>34</sup>, is this conversation between you and myself.

Therefore, having dissolved these qualifications of “me” and “you” let us simply enjoy the encounter, in its translation again and again.<sup>35</sup>

Cāṅgadevā, by using your excuse, the mother teacher Śrī Nivṛtti rāja has lovingly given this juicy foof of his self-realisation.<sup>36</sup>

While thus looking at each other, both these mirrors with vision- Jñānadeva and Cāṅgadeva— went beyond their distinct identities.

In the same manner, whoever will make these ovis his own mirror will attain the bliss of the self.

तथास्तु ।

### Notes and References

\* A paper read at the plenary session of the 7<sup>th</sup> International Vedānta Conference at the Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, 30 Oct.-2 Nov. 1996.

1. See Dhere 1990, 1991, Joshi 1974, Pethe 1973.

2. See Banahatti 1971, Jog 1978, D.B. Kulkarni 1975, V.D. Kulkarni 1977, Sahasrabudde 1991.

3. See Dhere 1990, 1991, Pethe 1973.

4. Gokhale 1967, Yerkuntwar 1975.

5. See Inamdar 1990, Pendse 1972.

6. See Khaire 1996, Joshi 1974, Pandit 1974, Pethe 1973

7. See Taware, 1990.

8. म्हणीनि माझी वैखरी । मीनातें म्हणे मीन करी । हे पाणिवावरी मकरी । रेखिली बैली ।।

9. हे शब्दविण संवादिते । इद्रियां नेणतां भोगिते । बोला आदीं झोबिते । प्रमेयासि ।। झा. १.५८

10. जे दिडीही न पविजे । तें दिडीविण देखिते । जहन्हे अतींद्रिय लाहिजे । ज्ञानबलें ।। ना तरि घातुवादिनां ही न जोडे । तें लोहीं वि पन्हें सांपडे । जरि दैवयोगें चडे । परिसु हाता ।। तैसी सदागुरुकृपा होए । तरि करितां काहू आयु नोहे । म्हणीनि अपार मार्तें आहे । ज्ञानदेओ म्हणे ।। तेणें कारणें मीं बोलेन । बोली अरुणाचें रूप दावीन । अतींद्रिय परि भोगवीन । इद्रियांकविति ।। झा. ६.३३.३६

11. All translations in this paper are mine.

12. There is a small bunch of faithful in Maharashtra who believe that he simply entered a state of samādhi while retaining his body, and that he is still in that state. Most scholars are of the opinion that he chose to end his life by using the yogic method of control of breath because he considered his life mission complete. For more on this subject, see Akujkar, 1978; also Pandit, 1974.

13. Also called Jñāneśvarī or Bhāvārtha-dīpikā. The first critical edition of the work was prepared by sant Eknāth. The first printed edition was made in 1845 by Bājāsāstri Jambhekar by using Śiṣā press. The English translation of Justin

Abbot 1929, Manu Subbhedar 1932, and R.D. Ranade 1933 are available, while V.G. Pradhan's English translation of the entire work is published in 1969 by Unesco. A posthumous edition based on the edition prepared by Mangrulkar-Keikar in three volumes with the original ovis, their Marathi translation, a comprehensive introduction, and indices and appendixes has recently been published by the Bombay University, 1995.

14. Cāṅga Vāṇśu or Cakrapāṇi are also given as his names.
15. सुंदर आणि लेखें न सूर । ते तो योक्ता गृंगार होये । ना लेइलें तरी आहे । तैलें कें उचित ॥ .... ना ना गुफितीं कां योक्ता । उणीं नवति परिमती । वसंतगमिचीं वाटीलीं । जोगरिं बैसि ॥ तैलें गणीव तें मिथी । गीतें वीण एंगु दावी । तो लाभाचा बंधु बोवी । केता मियां ॥ झा. 18. 1717 - 1720.
16. येकपण नळे घुहास । म्हणीनि शिष्याचे करेनि प्रिस । जें पाहणोंचि आपुली वास । पाहत असे ॥ लीसिणि ल्होळीं हस वै नैव रेमे । तस्माद् एकाकी न रपते । स द्वितीमम् ऐच्छन् ।
17. Anubhāvāmṛta 771-776.
18. Anubhāvāmṛta 140. हिंजी मुलाचिचे बत्ते । पाठिचेया कडीनि पावे । तें आरसे बांदोळावे । लागती कोई?
19. See Anubhāvāmṛta 38, 61, 110, 129, 132, 140, 179, 243, 257, 269, 288, 289, 374, 513, 521, 593, 602, 607, 612, 702.
20. Anubhāvāmṛta 243-4. ना ना मुखा दाऊनि । आरसा जाय निगीनि । कां निवैलें चंबडनि । चेवविलें बेवीं ॥ तैसा सन्निदानंदं खोखा । दाउनी प्रेयासि द्रष्टा । मग तिन्ही पदें निपती वाटा । मीनाचिया ॥
21. Anubhāvāmṛta 288-9. बाप उपेगी शब्दु । जो स्मरणदानीं प्रसिद्ध । अमूर्ताचा विशदु । आरिसा नोहे ॥ पाहलें आरिसा पाहे । येथें नवल काह आहे? परि दर्शन येणें होये । न पातोंही पातें ॥
22. किंबहुना शब्दु । स्मरणदानीं प्रसिद्ध । परि यासि नाही संबु । आत्मविश्वी ॥ Anubhāvāmṛta 299. See also 300-306
23. बाळजात खाऊनि । बाळकचरी पिउनि । ठाकली निदीबोनी । पर येथ ॥ Anubhāvāmṛta 763.
24. Anubhāvāmṛta 282-284. पोरसि पडलीं मिठी । तेथें नादा साचा सल्लु तुठी । या वापरिचे ओठी । हें कें असे ॥ चेष्टियाही पाठी । चेवण्याचिया गोष्टी । किं घाला कैसे पाटीं रंपनाचां । उदेलेया दिवसपती ॥ ते दिवे कैसे शोपती । बाचीनि पिकला नेती । तुजती नांगर काई ॥
25. Anubhāvāmṛta 334-34। अविद्या नासावी । हे काहील कोणि बिबी । तेणें साली काढावी । आकाशाची ॥ तेणें सेळी गाळां दोहावी । गुहपांचा डोळीं वास पाहवी । बाळ्योनि घुरी करावी । सांबवेलेची ॥ जांभे वाटीनि रसु । काहाडावा बहुयसु । कातउनि आळसु । मोदळा पाजावा । तो पाटा पाणी परतु । पडिली साजली उत्तपु । बारवाचे तांतु । बल्लु सुखें ॥ तो बागुलातें मारु । प्रतिबिंब खोळे भरु । तळहातीचे विवरु । केसा सुखें ॥ पटाचें नाहिल्लण फोडु । गगनाची पुर्तें तोडु । ससेयाचें मोडु । सिंग सुखें ॥ तो कापुराची मसी करु । रत्नादिपीं काजळ घरु । बांधेचें लेकरु । परणु सुखें ॥ तो अंबसेचेनि सुपाकरें । पोसु पाताळिचीं चकरीं । मृगजळिचीं बळपरे । कांडु सुखें ॥....
26. पुढां स्नेह पाझरे । मगां चलति अक्षरें । शब्दु पाठि अजतरे । कृपा आसी ॥ झा १३३६२
27. For more on the topic of Jñānadeva's communications with his listeners see D.B. Kulkarni, 1975.
28. तरी अवधान एकलें देखे । मग सर्वसुखानि पत्र घेइने । हें प्रतिज्ञोत्तर पाझरे । आइका ॥ झा १.२.
29. आइकां रसात्मकाचिया लोभां । किं श्रवणिं वि होथि बीभा । बोलें इद्रियां लागे कलभा । येकमेकां ॥ साहाजें शब्दु तरी विषो श्रवणाचा । परि रसना म्हणे कां रसु वि हा आपचा । घ्राणासि भाव्यो जाये परिमलाचा । हा तो चि कां होईल । नवल बोलसिये रेखेची वाहणी । दावितो दोलेयां हीं पुरीं लागे आणि । ते म्हणति उपदृष्टी कां खाणि । रुपांची है ॥ झा. ६. १५-१८
30. परि ते भगंचा कर्णी आइकावें । बोलु मुद्रिकां डोला देखावें । हें साटोवार्ती घेआवें । चित्ताचिया ॥ अवधानाचेनि हातें । नेया पां हृदया आंतीतें । हें रिझावितील आपणितें । जाणांचिए ॥ झा ६. ४९१-२
31. आता आम्हेंचें सुनास जाते । सुतीसी श्रवण निपाते । आरसे उठिले । लोचनांसि । आपुलेनि समीरपणे । वेल्हावतीं विजयें । मायेचि चायेपणे । बहकताती ॥ विष



- लेण्णी रसे । सूर्यचि कमळी विकसे । चकोर जाता असे । चंद्रचि मा ॥ फुलें बाले भुंवर । तरुणिया जाले न । जाता आपुलें सोबार । निबालुचि ॥
- 32 वाचें बरवें कवित्व । कवित्वाँ रसिकत्व । रसिकत्वाँ परतत्व । स्पर्शुं जैसा ॥
- 33 तेया पुत्र मू वटेवराचा । खा जैसा कापुराचा । बागेचा, मय तुज आपणयाचा । नोतु ऐके ॥ झण्टेवो म्हणे । तुज माझा बातु ऐकर्णे । तें तळहरता तळीं मिठी देणे । जेयापी ॥ नोलेचि नोतु ऐकिजे । स्वादेचि स्वादु चाखिजे । कां उजिवडें देखिजे । उजिवडा जेचि ॥ सोनिया वरकतु सोनें जैसा । कां मुख मुखा हो आसि । मय तुज संबार तैसा । चक्रपाणि ॥ Cāṅgadeva pāsaṣṭhi 37-40.
- 34 Another name of Cāṅgadeva. However, as it means 'the discus-holder', it is also a famous name of Kṛṣṇa, or Viṭṭhala, the God.
- 35 आतां मीं तूं चा उपाधी । ग्रासेनि भेटी नुसपी । ते भोगिली अनुवादी । पोळपोळुं ॥ Cāṅgadeva pāsaṣṭhi 53.
- 36 चंगदेवा तुझेनि व्याजें । माडतिया श्री निमृशिराजें । स्वातुचव रसाळ खाजें । दिवले लोभे । एवं ज्ञानदेव काव्यानी ऐसे । दोनी दोळस आरिसे । परस्पर पाहतां कैसे । फुलले भेदा ॥ तिर्येपरी को इवा । दर्शन करीस ओखिवा । तो आत्माएवदिवा । मिळेल सुखा ॥ Cāṅgadeva pāsaṣṭhi 61-3.

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University of British Columbia  
Vancouver, Canada

# The Dance of Shiva : Art and Metaphors in South Asia

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JANE DURAN

The Dance of Shiva- the cosmic dance of life and death – is a focal point of much of the bronzework of the South India, and also a crux of much of the mythology of the region, particularly as that mythology has been translated and packaged for the Western world.<sup>1</sup> Heinrich Zimmer, Joseph Campbell and others have focused on this icon of Hindu worship as a point of intersection for influences that we associate with life, death, and rebirth. The bronzework of South India was impressive enough to the British colonizers that it attracted immediate notice, and it has traditionally received the interest of art historians, even those historians who might be inclined to be dismissive of some other Asian work. Part of what has proven to be particularly attractive about the Dancing Shiva image is the fluidity of the movement as captured in bronze, in concert with the mythography behind the work. Rowland notes:

The most famous and dramatic of the images of the South Indian school are those of Nataraja, or Siva as Lord of the Dance. To the Dravidian imagination, Siva's dance, the *Nadanta*, is the personification of all the forces and powers of the cosmic system in operation, the movement of energy within the universe. In him they have their dayspring and in him their death.... Siva's dance personifies his universe in action and destruction. This is his dance in the last night of the world when the stars fall from their courses and all is reduced to ashes, to be ever rekindled, ever renewed by the boundless power of the lord.<sup>2</sup>

In our attempt to apply European concepts pertaining to the aesthetic to the art of non-European cultures, we frequently find ourselves essaying to work with notions such as form and expression, and then making the relevant Procrustean moves in an effort to place the objects in the requisite categories. But the complex symbolic background of many of the pieces Europeans have encountered in Asian, African and Native American cultures virtually demands that some note be taken of their associations and overall cultural provenance. This is perhaps scarcely more true than in Hindu India, where the everyday life of the inhabitants is a navigation of the symbolic in action. In this paper I plan to

examine the use of certain European concepts with respect, in particular, to the South Indian Shiva bronzes, and I will argue also for a view of these objects that is underwritten more straightforwardly by mythological and symbolic associations.

## I

Many of those who have attempted to apply aesthetic concepts to non-European art have been entranced by theories of form similar to those originally espoused by Roger Fry and Clive Bell. Indeed, even Fry seemed to be inclined to admit that African art, for example, displayed a noteworthy use of form, and the Harlem Renaissance commentator Alain Locke was intrigued enough by Fry's assertions on this score that he attempted to apply them in the development of an African American aesthetic.<sup>3</sup> Such has also been the case with the art of India: accounts of it in terms of Western aesthetic theories almost invariably deal with the notion of form and its relationship to the plasticity of Indian sculpture and iconography. Interestingly, some of the commentary on Indian rock carving, in particular, seems to mirror this excision from Bell's original work:

As a rule, primitive art is good—and here again my hypothesis is helpful—for, as a rule, it is also free from descriptive qualities.... [Y]ou will only find significant form.... Primitives produce art ~~because they~~ must; they have no other motive than a passionate desire ~~to express~~ their sense of form.<sup>4</sup>

The rock carvings at Mahabalipuram, then, were noteworthy to the original British commentators not because they had any pronounced interest in the tale of the descent of the Ganges (the theme of the relief carvings), but because the plasticity in the carvings—the details in the serpent's tail, or the sinewy cast of the elephant's trunk—revealed, as Rowland notes, an "...unrestrained [flow] over the entire available surface of the boulder."<sup>5</sup>

Now the remarks of most of those familiar with the Dance of Shiva bronzes from the Chola culture of South India are similar in nature. We are told that the "arrangement" and "torsion" of the figures achieve an effect somewhat akin to that of Mannerist work;<sup>6</sup> again Rowland goes so far as to say that "In their canon of absolute...beauty...[these images achieve] almost mathematical purity and clarity of form..."<sup>7</sup> But there is a great deal more to be said about these images and the conceptual background that informs them than can be hinted at in a comparison with European Mannerism. To be fair, this aspect is certainly not ignored in most of the literature. Commentators such as Coomaraswamy, who possess a greater degree of personal familiarity with the relevant background, feel free to expand at length on the symbolism involved.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the attempt to intrude European notions of form into this essentially Asian space demands still further clarification and exemplification.

## II

In a piece called " 'Primitive Fakes', 'Tourist Art', and the Ideology of Authenticity" , Larry Shiner has recently delineated an interesting conundrum for those concerned with the art of the Third World. It appears that what is deemed to be "authentic" Third World art is, in many cases, not something done with free intention and with the motivation of expression; on the contrary, what is often deemed authentic in such a context is something done under conditions more reminiscent of Collingwood's notion of the production of craft.<sup>9</sup> Yet however closely pieces of, for example, African art resemble works that might in the West be dubbed instances of craft, the fact that they were composed for a specific act or ritual almost seems to count in their favor for purposes of aesthetic categorization of artwork when their provenance is taken into consideration. Here is Shiner on this problem:

What dealers, collectors, and art historians call 'authentic' Primitive or Traditional Art is a piece 1) made by a member of a small-scale society, 2) in the society's traditional style, and 3) intended for a traditional social or religious function. In African Art galleries in the U.S., for example, one sometimes finds penciled onto the price tag of a mask not only a designation of tribe and function but also the phrase, 'has been danced'. The pieces deemed 'inauthentic' Primitive Art and therefore demoted to the status of fakes or tourist art are those made in a traditional style but intended to be sold on the world art market.<sup>10</sup>

Much of Shiner's commentary is intended to apply ~~either to African or Native American art~~, but the focus of the commentary can be taken as applicable to the art of India as well. In other words, the art of India has the following in common with, again, the art of Africa: much of what was originally done had some sort of purpose not necessarily ritualistic, but perhaps to manifest a religious spirit, pay homage to a particular deity or demiurge, act in spirit with aspects of the atman, and so forth. This does not necessarily mean that the art cannot be categorized in any other way, but what it does mean is that to fail to take into account some of these purposes or goals is to miss the point of what was originally undertaken. In this respect, Shiner's note that many pieces of "authentic" African art possess the tag "has been danced" (although Shiner will later find this somewhat paradox-producing) is revelatory: perhaps we should think of pieces of the art of India as bearing the inscription "has been meditated."

## III

The tendency of commentators to try to categorize the Dancing Shiva, or Shiva Nataraja bronzes along the lines of European or even Renaissance rubrics is pronounced and remarkable. This is not to say, as I indicated at an earlier point, that such categorization

is senseless: rather, however accurate it may be in its details, it begs the question with regard to the original purpose of the work and the larger issue of what that purpose says about cultural determinants as a whole. Whereas commentators such as Zimmer, whose goals are mythographical rather than art historical, understandably see the works of art as a part of a larger whole (a whole which Zimmer, for one, is well able to articulate) art historians such as Rowland frequently cast the Dancing Shivas in terms that refer to concepts of European art. Rowland notes, for example, that "The sense of violent and yet effortless movement is conveyed by the *contrapposto* of the figure and by the coordinated rhythm of the left leg and arm."<sup>11</sup> With regard to another such figure, he asserts that it has something of "the effect of the *figura serpentinata*" of the late Italian Renaissance.<sup>12</sup> Although Coomaraswamy says of the Shiva Nataraja ;

No doubt the root idea behind all of these dances is more or less one and the same, the manifestation of primal rhythmic energy.<sup>13</sup>

Rowland wants to speak of "torsion". It is not, of course, that there is no merit to what Rowland says about these images: some elements of European theory, such as the formalist theories of the earlier part of this century, may find rich and fruitful sources of exemplification in the art of South Asia. Rather, the point is that there is much more to the image of the Dancing Shiva, and it requires an elucidation of the symbolic and mythological background in order for a solid case about the worth of these pieces to be made.

Part of the conceptual difficulty with the type of rubric employed by Rowland above is that it carries the implication, as indicated earlier in the set of paradoxes unraveled by Shiner, that the artist or craftsman had something like a Eurocentric concept of art and art activity in mind when he or she (almost certainly "he") set out originally to create the piece. But all of our experience indicates that this is not the case. Just as a Dogon mask or Yoruba image is almost certainly constructed (particularly in the pre-European contact culture) with ritual in mind—and not, as we might want to have it, with expression in mind—the Shaivite or Shiva devotee cannot primarily have been moved by such expressionist considerations in the creation of a Chola bronze. To suggest that fluidity, balance, and the achievement of *contrapposto* figured in the creation of the piece is almost certainly to err, however helpful such notions may be in our attempts to be specific about what it is that renders the pieces visually compelling. But this is precisely what Rowland conveys with his use of the phrase "...afforded the craftsman greater freedom to express".<sup>14</sup> Nor is Rowland the only critic to indulge in such language; similar wording is found in Bussagli and Sivaramamurti and in Kramrisch.<sup>15</sup>

I have written in another place of the tendency to see stylistic differences where few or none may exist<sup>16</sup>—this tendency is paralleled by our intuitive desire to see something like European artistic motive where little or none may exist. But the conundrum uncovered by attempting to look at the Shiva Nataraja's in this fashion is catalytic, I claim, with respect to our greater understanding of such pieces.

#### IV

That the import of the Shiva's is largely one of iconographic stylization is more obvious when one compares the standard regalia of the Shiva, its strength in the Hindu mythological system, and the types of signals that allow one to distinguish Shaivite sculpture from, say, Vaishnavite or other sculpture.

It is not only that the point of the energy contained in the Shiva Nataraja is to produce the notion of the cosmic dance, but most of the other paraphernalia of the Shiva must be present in the average figure in order for us to be able to ascertain that it is indeed Shiva: the trident, the crescent moon, and, in some instances, the half of the goddess Parvati (where Shiva is depicted as a two-halved figure). If the concept is devotion, the craftsman or artist can invoke this devout attitude almost immediately with the use of one or more of the above accoutrements. Rowland is, in fact, on firmer ground here when he writes (of the Descent of the Ganges relief at Mahabalipuram):

The greatest achievement of the Pallava sculptors was the carving of an enormous granite boulder on the seashore with a representation of the Descent of the Ganges [from the head of Shiva] from the Himalayas... We have here a perfect illustration of the dualism persistent in Indian art between an intensive naturalism and the conception of divine forms according to the principles of an appropriately abstract canon of proportions.<sup>17</sup>

Here we can assert that Rowland is implicitly admitting that the driving motive is something more along the lines of religious attitude, and that use of principle of "an appropriately abstract canon of proportions" is in fact secondary. The odd thing about so many of the images of gods and goddesses in Indian art is that they remind us, in some ways, of the concept of the *mandala*. This abstract design triggers the concept of the cosmos because it mirrors the cosmos in a vague sense of representation and also, presumably, because of its ubiquitousness in religious contexts.<sup>18</sup> The same is true of the Shiva figures. Iconicity and mythology are paramount here, and are the conceptual apparatus around which everything else revolves.

One can hypothesize, then, that there are multiple contexts in the greater Hindu society in which bare recognition of a Shiva figure affords the possibility of devotion for



the Shaivite, and that this conventionalization can be taken to an extreme—one can imagine, for example, mass-produced figures distinguishable only because of one or more “signs” (as indicated above) that distinguish one devotional figure from another. (Brahma, for example, is not a popular figure of worship, but is conventionally portrayed with four faces—thus any four-faced figure is Brahma.). With respect to the Dancing Shiva figures, there is, to be sure, a larger aspect at work here, one upon which we have already touched. But the greater point is that conventionality, iconicity and mythology merge to provide a take on Shiva-as-divinity that allows the craftsman comparatively little room in which to maneuver. This line of argument, while underscoring again the importance of the religious element in the construction of such a figure, also militates against the use of European notions of Renaissance workmanship as being appropriate modes of analysis for the Chola figures.

As I have argued in another place,<sup>19</sup> one might be inclined to think that the philosophical problem of representationality in artworks would be most apparent for mythological figures, since there is no genuine referent against which the alleged representation can be measured. But paradoxically, the problem of representation is not nearly as difficult for a symbolized figure such as Shiva as it is, for example, for an historical figure such as Akhenaton about whom we know comparatively little, and where stylization—at least originally—counts almost for nothing.

So the story with regard to the Chola bronzes is primarily one of iconicity and devotion, and only secondarily one of craftsmanship. And even if we may conclude that it is indeed craftsmanship that can be given an account of in terms of the European constructs adduced by some of the commentators, the fact that we can guess that “expression” counted for comparatively little in the making of these bronzes ought indeed to make us wary of employing this terminology on a regular basis.

The Shiva figures do indeed, in one sense, represent the height of a certain sort of craftsmanship, and we can speak of that craftsmanship in terms of *contrapposto* if we so choose. But if we do make that choice, we have lost touch with what drove the artist or craftsman to create the bronzes in the first place. We can hypothesize this motivation as based on a worldview significantly different from ours, a view in which the metaphorical import of the bronzes is more striking than anything that might be said about their proportion.

Perhaps, in fact, all of these notions—Eurocentric art historical concepts and mythographical ones—are related in ways that have not yet been fully articulated. When Rowland calls the boulders of Mahabalipuram “the greatest achievement of the Pallava sculptors”<sup>20</sup> may be he is really trying to get at something close to what I assert here—the

force of the work is the fusion of the symbolic and the craft. Just as the boulders tell us about an "intensive naturalism" and "the conception of divine forms"<sup>21</sup>, the bronzes tell us something about energy. That they do so in a way that is striking both to viewers from South Asia and viewers from Europe attests to their power, even if that power does not derive from the concept of artistic expression in a way that would make us feel either familiar or comfortable.

### Notes and References

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3. Locke, Alain. "The Legacy of the Ancestral Arts", *The New Negro*, New York: Macmillan, 1992.
4. Bell, Clive. *Art*, New York: Frederick Stokes & Co., 1913, pp. 22-23, 39.
5. Rowland. in *op. cit.*, pp. 183-184.
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7. *Ibid.*
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11. Rowland. in *op. cit.*, p. 192.
12. *Ibid.* p. 199.
13. Coomaraswamy. in *op. cit.*, p. 66.
14. Rowland. in *op. Cit.*, p. 192.
15. See Bussagli, Mario and Shivaramamurti, Calembus, *5000 Years of the Art of India*, New York: Harry Abrams, 1972. Although Stella Kramrisch Makes similar comments in her *The Art of India*, see also Kramrisch, *The Presence of Shiva*, Princeton: Princeton University press, 1982.
16. See "Aesthetic Discrimination", in *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Spring 1992.
17. Rowland. in *op. cit.*, pp. 183-184.
18. For an interesting discussion of the importance of the mandala in the culture of India, see Khanna, Madhu, *Yantra*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1979.

19. See "The Art of Amarna and the Art of India: a Study in Representation", in the *Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics*, Orissa, India, 1992.
20. Rowland. in *op. cit.*, pp. 183-184.
21. *Ibid*

University of California  
Santa Barbara  
California  
U.S.A.

# The Analogy Between Food And Art: Tolstoy and Eaton

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S.K. WERTZ

In her discussion of consequential theories of aesthetic value, Marcia Eaton presents Tolstoy's food analogy to explain "a confusion he thought accounted for the prevalence of counterfeit art and a misunderstanding about what constitutes real value."<sup>1</sup> In the end, Eaton concludes that "the analogy is not very helpful." I find her argument wanting, and this has prompted me to reexamine the Count's analogical argument. Below I shall review and analyze his argument, look at Eaton's analysis and criticism, and suggest (with her assistance) an alternative interpretation which centers around her definition of "art."

Tolstoy starts out with a generalization against inherent theories of aesthetic value—ones which Monroe Beardsley<sup>2</sup> and Professor Eaton (129,143) wish to defend — "If we say that the aim of *any* activity is merely our pleasure and define it solely by that pleasure, our definition will evidently be a false one."<sup>3</sup> If this is true of any human activity, surely it is true of art and food, so one commonality is established for the analogy, at least in Tolstoy's mind. He tells us what an adequate definition must consist of: "In order to define any human activity, it is necessary to understand its sense and importance; and in order to do this it is primarily necessary to examine that activity in itself, in its dependence on its causes and in connexion with its effects, and not merely in relation to the pleasure we can get from it" (116). Tolstoy sets up the first half of the analogical argument this way:

But this [defining an activity by our pleasure in it] is precisely what has occurred in the efforts to define art. Now if we consider the food question it will not occur to any one to affirm that the importance of food consists in the pleasure we receive when eating it. Everybody understands that the satisfaction of our taste cannot serve as a basis for our definition of the merits of food, and that we have therefore no right to presuppose that dinners with cayenne pepper, Limburg cheese, alcohol, and so on, to which we are accustomed and which please us [he is speaking of the Russian

diet here!], form the very best human food. (116; clauses in braces are added)

Tolstoy at this juncture makes the inferential move from the food question to art: "In the same way beauty, or that which pleases us, can in no sense serve as a basis for the definition of art; nor can a series of objects which afford us pleasure serve as the model of what art should be" (116-117). There is no connection made among objects which would give the series definitive power by pleasure – it is a reflection upon *us* rather than the objects. The central portion of his extended argument is given in the following passage:

Just as people who conceive the aim and purpose of food to be pleasure cannot recognize the real meaning of eating, so people who consider the aim of art to be pleasure cannot realize its true meaning and purpose, because they attribute to an activity the meaning of which lies in its connexion with other phenomena of life, the false and exceptional aim of pleasure. People come to understand that the meaning of eating lies in the nourishment of the body, only when they cease to consider that the object of that activity is pleasure. And it is the same with regard to art. People will come to understand the meaning of art only when they cease to consider that the aim of that activity is beauty, that is to say, pleasure . . . And since discussions as to why one man likes pears and another prefers meat do not help towards finding a definition of what is essential in nourishment, so the solution of questions of taste in art (to which the discussions on art involuntarily come) not only does not help to make clear in what this particular human activity which we call art really consists, but renders such elucidation quite impossible until we rid ourselves of a conception which justifies every kind of art at the cost of confusing the whole matter. (117-118)

Now let us put Tolstoy's argument from analogy into standard form. The model (or one version of it)<sup>4</sup> is:

X and Y are alike. [An assumed premise which leads to the others.]

Things of type X have the properties of p, q, r, etc., and z.

*Things of type Y have the properties of p, q, r, etc.*

Things of type Y also have property z.

Instantiated, the argument of Tolstoy looks like this:

Food and art are alike. Food has the properties of not being solely pleasure, pleasing C the best, and nourishment. Art has the properties of not being solely pleasure, *pleasing (enjoyable)* <sup>1</sup> *the best (true art)*. Art also has real value like nourishment (an internal, defining component) of the soul, which Tolstoy later calls "spiritual food" (250): the communication of sincere feeling.

Eaton comments on the conclusion when she remarks: "Art, like food, is *really important*, and it could not be, Tolstoy reflected, if all it did were to give us pleasure. Its real value must lie in the contribution it makes to a healthy individual and a healthy society" (130; her emphasis). After a promising account of Tolstoy's analogical argument, she ends with this brief criticism:

Tolstoy failed to realize – or to admit – that even people who are forced to eat only nutritious food usually prefer something "tasty," at least occasionally. What is true of food may well be true of art. Thus the analogy is not very helpful. (130).

Now, I do not think Tolstoy would have distinguished the two – tasty from nutritious. Obviously food can (can probably should) be both, and the food of the peasant or lower class was usually both nutritious *and* tasty. We shouldn't think of hospital food when we are considering the nutritional value of food at this point. (But imagine Santa Fean New Mexican food, like Josie's or Maria's.)

There are numerous descriptions of peasant food in Tolstoy's major fiction, and one episode that comes to mind is from *Anna Karenina* where Levin had been out mowing with the peasants and they had taken a break.

The peasants got ready for dinner. Some washed, the young lads bathed in the stream, others made a place comfortable for a rest, untied their sacks of bread, and uncovered the pitchers of kvass. [for an explanation of this beverage, see footnote.] The old man crumbled up some bread in a cup, stirred it with the handle of a spoon, poured water on it from his whetstone-case, broke up some more bread, and . . . seasoned it with salt . . . "Come, master, taste my sop," said he, kneeling down before the cup. The sop was so good that Levin gave up the idea of going home for dinner.<sup>5</sup>

By this quote I do not mean to imply that we are to identify Tolstoy with his character Levin. What I do suggest by this kind of passage (of which this is only one example) is that Tolstoy did entertain the nutritious and the pleasurable (or tasty) with respect to food. It is just that the former is the aim or purpose and the latter is its main effect (and hence we should not lose sight of it, the pleasurable). So Eaton's claim about people preferring tasty to nutritious is unfounded because both attributions can be (and should be) made to food; hence, her conclusion does not follow or is at least poorly supported. Tolstoy was aware of these issues in regard to food and his fiction testify to this circumstance. But this is just the tip of the iceberg.

The most telling description of food that is both nutritious and pleasurable comes from Aylmer Maude's paraphrase of Tolstoy's thought in his essay "Tolstoy's View of Art" (1990) where the Count predicts: "The good art of the future should be superior to

our present art in clearness, *beauty*, simplicity, and compression, for one penalty of forgetting the primary aim of art is that we greatly lose that which is *a natural accompaniment of art – the pleasure given by beauty*. We are like men who, living to eat, eventually lose even *the natural pleasure food affords to those who eat to live*.”<sup>6</sup> Such a remark clearly casts doubt on Eaton’s first premise. Tolstoy’s objection to pleasure is as to the aim or object of an activity – whether food or art – and not with pleasure *per se*.

It is with the other half of the distinction in the analogy that I have questions – the nourishment part. Does peasant food have real or nutritional value? The Russian diet seems to be wanting in this regard; after all, how nutritious is the old man’s sop which Levin found so good that he gave up the idea of going home for dinner? What was Levin’s dinner menu? In a passage (I, 177-178) where dinner is served to a guest at Levin’s country estate the preliminary course consisted of bread-and-butter, salt goose and salted mushrooms, and herb-brandy. The nettle soup was next, followed by chicken in white sauce and white Crimean wine. Elsewhere (I, 189) fried eggs are mentioned for supper served with herb-brandy. One may have doubts about the old man’s sop, but “sops” were really “soups” when it came to the cuisine of the people:

In the old (pre-revolutionary) days, the peasant returning from a long day of labor in the fields joined his family around a crude wooden table in a tiny – sometimes a one – room – wooden cottage. Their repast, illuminated by weak oil lamps or flickering candles, consisted of a single nourishing course. It was simple and cheap, but hearty and flavorful. The head of the house cut the loaf of sour, dark Russian bread (the most important food staple) into thick slabs and a steaming bowl of *borshch* (beet soup) or *shchi* (cabbage soup) or *ukha* (fish soup) was passed around. When the soup was thin, as it often was, plates heaped high with the coarse cooked grain call *kasha* helped fill the diners’ stomachs. The food was lightened – and the spirits of the family lifted – by glass after glass of *kvas(s)*.<sup>7</sup>

Such a description is frequently found with literary variation in Tolstoy’s fiction. In a Moscow restaurant (the *England*), Tolstoy (I, 41-44) describes the dinner options: turbot, a fish snack, vodka (an aperitif), fresh oysters (Flensburg, not Ostend, although the latter were preferable), cabbage soup, porridge *a la Russe*, white bread, clear soup with vegetables, roast beef with capons, white seal, stewed fruitage (for dessert), Parmesan cheese, and to drink with a the meal, the wines were Champagne, Nuits, and Chablis. The soup and the porridge appealed most to Levin (since they are food of the people). In the course of the dinner Stepan Arkadyevich remarks the aim of culture is to make everything a source of enjoyment, and Levin responds, “Well, if that’s its aim, I’d rather be a savage”

(I, 44). Levin was horrified at the meal's cost – over 26 roubles (I, 51). “Levin belonged to the second class” (I, 59) of Russian high society. An example of the sort of thing which Tolstoy despised in the Czars' dietary habits is contained in the following episode:

“They (the Schutzburges) asked my husband and myself to dinner, and I was told that the sauce at that dinner cost a thousand roubles,” Princess Miaghkaia said, speaking loudly, conscious that all were listening; “and very nasty sauce it was – some green mess. We had to ask them, and I made a sause for eighty-five kopecks, and everyone was very much pleased with it. I can't afford thousand-rouble sauces.” (I, 150)

Her sentiment was exactly Levin's and indeed the Count's, too.

Eaton's premise in her criticism is curious for another reason because Tolstoy's instances of peasant art are usually those of people who are enjoying themselves. He writes of the singing of a “choir” (really just an informal group) of peasant women who sang with “a definite feeling of joy, cheerfulness, and energy, was expressed, that without noticing how it infected me” (221). This incident found its way into *Anna* where he narrates: “The women, all singing, began to come close to Levin, and he felt as though a storm were swooping down upon him with a thunder of merriment ... and the whole meadow and distant fields all seemed to be shaking and singing to the measures of this wild merry song, with its shouts and whistles and clapping. Levin felt envious of this health and mirthfulness; he longed to take part in the expression of this joy of life” (I, 302). So, of course, Tolstoy realized and admitted true art – real or genuine art – could be pleasurable – just like food could be; consequently, contrary to Eaton, the analogy, I think, is very helpful and moreover appropriate.

One of the reasons why is that the nutrition/pleasure confusion in food is seen in art with the confusion of real value and instrumental value (i.e., pleasure). “The art of commoners communicates sincere feeling, according to Tolstoy,” Eaton reasons, “and hence has genuine value” (130), much like a “hungry animal eagerly clutches every object it can get, hoping to find nourishment in it” (*Anna*, II, 33) and not seeking pleasure in it, although pleasure may accompany it, it is not to be confused with its real value (see note 6). One of the marks of a good analogy is that the Xs and Ys have essential or characteristically shared attributes or features; the food analogy does possess these. And we expect something like this of someone of the literary stature of Tolstoy who has such masterful, fictional skills and imagination. Writers like Tolstoy are masters of metaphor, description, and analogy, and their works of fiction are exquisite blends of these linguistic elements.



To drive this point home, we can use food as a test case for Eaton's definition of "art":

X is a work of art if and only if X is an artifact and X is discussed in such a way that information concerning its history of production brings the audience to attend to intrinsic properties considered worthy of attention in aesthetic traditions (history, criticism, theory).<sup>8</sup>

For X within the domain of food, I shall talk about bread, A Daily Loaf, *pain ordinaire* Careme. Here is what Bernard Clayton has to say about Careme (1784-1833) and his bread:

The great eighteenth-century French cook and founder of *la grande cuisine*, Antonin Careme, wrote of grand dishes for princes and kings, yet he created an ordinary loaf of bread that has been passed down from one generation of bakers to the next for more than 175 years. Careme, who has been called the cook of kings and the king of cooks, wrote: "Cooks who travel with their gastronomically minded masters can, from now on, by following this method, procure fresh bread each day." This excellent bread is made with hard wheat bread flour to give the dough the ability to withstand the expansion it undergoes when it rises more than three times its original volume. Baking at high heat provides the oven-spring that makes possible the formation of a large cellular structure, the distinguishing characteristic of *pain ordinaire*.<sup>9</sup>

First of all, our *pain ordinaire* is an artifact – something created from a recipe by a baker (a skilled craftsman) – much like a particular musical performance by musicians following a score. The particular loaf will vary with weather conditions, room conditions, who is making it, and so on, much like the musical performance will vary by who is playing it, where, when, and so on. But the essential defining characteristics of the loaf do not vary, so it is identifiable as *pain ordinaire*. Identity and repeatability are necessary conditions for something to be considered one of the languages of art (see Eaton, *BIA*, ch.4).

*Pain ordinaire*, our X, is also discussed by Bernard Clayton, and many others,<sup>10</sup> in such a way that information (the type of flour used, the dough's expansion, the baking, and so on) concerning its history of production (Careme's life and times, his method and writings) brings the audience (that numbers into the thousands of cooking fanatics) to attend to intrinsic properties (the bread's shape, color, weight, smell, taste, and "large cellular structure") considered worthy of attention in aesthetic traditions (history, criticism, theory). For this last condition – the aesthetic – we have been witnessing the revising of views about what constitutes the canon of art in addition to technological changes in

cooking which bring us to attend to qualities that are finally being recognized as worthy of serious aesthetic attention (see Eaton, 95). (Think of all the refined cookbooks, choice magazines, gourmet cooking shows on TV, and fine restaurants that pay attention to these details.) The way food is made, presented, and appreciated can elevate it to an art form. Indeed, in some cases it is or has been a work of art.<sup>11</sup> My test case can be further augmented, but I think my claim has been established.

So if food satisfies Eaton's definition of "art" (and I have shown that in the above paragraph), then food has the essential properties (necessary and sufficient conditions) to be regarded as art – whether from the standpoint of identity (Eaton or my interpretation of Eaton) or analogy (Tolstoy). In fact, given some of the activities Tolstoy includes as genuine art (triumphal marches, utensils, jest, dress, the ornamentation of houses), he probably would be amicable to the inclusion of food on its list. Cooking and eating could be ways of communicating sincere feelings towards one another (as *gestures* perhaps) in a family or a group, e.g., our (American) Thanksgiving dinner which is as much celebration of certain traditional values as it is a meal. Symbolism is present here.

Towards the end, Eaton argues for a position which is remarkably close to Tolstoy's: "If by 'inherent' one means 'separable from all other areas of our experience', then aesthetic value is consequential. If 'consequential' means 'independent of the pleasure or displeasure the object itself gives us', then aesthetic value must be inherent. Both factors, I think, are part of aesthetic experiences" (145). Given what I have presented above, Tolstoy would probably agree. He could have well made the following statement by Professor Eaton: "The consequences of engaging in aesthetic activity are often as important as the inherent pleasure obtained from them" (144). She combines these two theories in much the same way she combines the moral and the aesthetic – something Tolstoy would have certainly approved of.

The analogy, as I have claimed above, is a good one, but that does not mean that it is not without faults. As the passages from *Anna* indicate, Tolstoy romanticizes the peasants and their food through the eyes of Levin. This is clearly a shortcoming, but by itself this criticism is not devastating. Tolstoy sees a connection between peasant cuisine and the cuisine of the upper classes. Elite cuisine becomes corrupted and loses sight of its purpose when it no longer has peasant (or regional) cuisine as its base. Expert or erudite cuisine (of the upper classes for Tolstoy), as Jean-Francois Ravel describes it,<sup>12</sup> as "*bad international cuisine that transports the picturesqueness of a regional dish (i.e., peasant or popular cuisine) without transposing its principles*, because they have not been understood. When such comprehension exists, on the other hand, real (or

good) Grand Cuisine can sometimes give the diversity of local registers an interpretation that is at once faithful and new" (247; his emphases, bracketed phrases added). He adds that "a chef who loses all contact with popular cuisine rarely succeeds in putting something really exquisite together.

Furthermore, it is a striking fact that truly great erudite cuisine has arisen principally in places where a tasty and varied traditional cuisine already existed, serving it as a sort of basis" (149). Tolstoy anticipates the dialectical relationship between these two cuisines in his discussions of food. Consequently Tolstoy looking back to pleasant food or cuisine as the paradigm of what it should be is not without foundation in the food literature, e.g., Revel's account.

Perhaps I should, in closing, heed the advice of the poet A. R. Ammons: "argument is like dining: mess with a nice dinner long enough, it's garbage."<sup>13</sup> Maybe I messed too long with the food analogy.<sup>14</sup>

## Notes and References

1. Marcia Muelder Eaton. *Basic Issues in Aesthetics* (Belmont California : Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1988), 130. Hereafter, references or citations will be made by page number within parentheses in the body of the paper; this includes Eaton's *BIA* plus those listed below.
2. Monroe Beardsley. *Aesthetics* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1958), 531.
3. Leo Tolstoy. *What Is Art? And Essays on Art*, translated by Aylmer Maude (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), 116; emphasis added.
4. See, for example, Robert D. Boyd. *Critical Reasoning : The Fixation of Belief* (Bessemer, Alabama: Colonial Press, 1992), 124-126.
5. Leo Tolstoy. *Anna Karenina*, translated by Constance Garnett (Two Volumes; Moscow: State Publishing House for Fiction and Poetry, 1933), I, 279. Kvass is a beer of slight alcoholic content and mildly acid flavor usually made in the home by the Russian people by pouring warm water over a mixture of rye, barley, and other cereals and allowing it to ferment. See John Ayto, *The Diner's Dictionary : Food and Drink from A to Z* (New York : Oxford University Press, 1993), 186.
6. Aylmer Maude. *Tolstoy on Art* (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), 368-369; emphases added. A later critic, John Bayley in *Tolstoy and the Novel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966/1968) believes: "Tolstoy's central conviction that bad art is an affair of the will is expressed more powerfully in the narration of *Anna* than in his theoretical statements. Such artistic activity-whether as producer of spectator-means that one's life is not proceeding along natural, simple and inevitable lines. To amuse oneself with art is like amusing oneself with food, or with sex, and making a diversion out of something

that should be an essential' (235). Obviously Bayley is persuaded by the analogy and primarily for the reasons that Maude and I have cited.

7. Helen and George Paspshvily. *Russian Cooking* (Foods of the World series; New York: Time-Life Books, 1969), 65. See ch. III for receipts and cultural details that surround them (65-99).
8. *BIA*, 94, and in Eaton's *Art and Nonart: Reflections on an Orange Crate and a Moose Call* (East Brunswick: Associated University Presses, 1983), 99-122.
9. Bernard Clayton, Jr., *The Complete Book of Breads* (Revised Edition; New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 253.
10. See Reay Tannahill, *Food in History* (New York: Stein and Day Publishers, 1973), 333-342; Maguelonne Toussaint-Samat, *A History of Food*, translated from the French by Anthea Bell (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 535, 731-734; and almost every cookbook devoted to bread.
11. As Laura Esquivel relates in her novel, *Like Water for Chocolate*, translated by Carol and Thomas Christensen (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 230: "Esperanza and Alex spent many afternoons following these recipes to the letter so they could make invitations that were unique, and in that they had succeeded. Each was a work of art. They were the product of crafts that have, unfortunately, gone out of style, like long dresses, love letters, and the waltz." And "On Food and Happiness," Charles Simic recalls, "Like pizza today, it's [burek is] usually good no matter where you get it, but it can also be a work of art." In *Not for Bread Alone: Writers on Food, Wine, and the Art of Eating*, edited by Daniel Halpern (Hopewell, New Jersey: The Ecco Press, 1993), 19.
12. Jean-Francois Revel. *Culture and Cuisine* (New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 1982), and excerpts in *Cooking, Eating, Thinking : Transformative Philosophies of Food*, edited by Deane W. Curtin and Lisa M. Heldke (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), 145-152 and 244-250, from which my references are taken.
13. A. R. Ammons. *Garbage: A Poem* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993/1994), 68.
14. For more on the food/art question, see Marienne L. Quinet's interesting study, "Food as Art: The Problem of Function," *British Journal of Aesthetics*, XXI #2 (Spring 1981): 159-171; and for philosophical hints, see M.F.K. Fisher, *The Art of Eating* (Vintage Books; New York: Random House, 1976), e.g., 265: "eating meat [when herbal butters are added] becomes not a physical function, like breathing or defecating, but an agreeable and almost [? ! ; what about is an] intellectual satisfaction of the senses" (emphasis added). Quinet quotes this passage in the conclusion of her study; it would make a good beginning for an exploration between food and philosophy.

I wish to thank Marcia Eaton for her comments and suggestions on this paper. The shortcomings that remain are, of course, of my own making. An earlier draft of the essay was read at the Rocky Mountain Division annual meeting of the American Society for Aesthetics held at St. John's College in Santa Fe, July 14, 1996.

Department of Philosophy  
 Texas Christian University  
 Fortworth, Texas, U.S.A.- (76129)

# Beauty of / and Harmony in Classical Chinese Aesthetics

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ZHOU LAI-XIANG

## I

### Classical beauty and art of harmony

In general, so-called classical beauty of harmony is a harmoniously organic whole in which all of the beautiful elements are related simply and dialectically. It includes subject and object, people and nature, individual and society, content and form in which every relation becomes free or possesses free quality. The art of classical beauty of harmony is in the mode of this, in which each aspect: subject and object, representation and expression, reality and ideal, emotion and reason, artistic conception and type, space and time, content and form are seen to differ from one another and relate with each other and become a steady, orderly whole. Obviously, this classical art is created according to the ideal and rules of classical beauty of harmony. And in classical art, the ideal of classical beauty of harmony is reflected. Their spiritual qualities are the same, but the ways of existence are different: one is the existence of objective thing, the other is the product of spiritual ideology; one is more sensitive and more realistic, the other is more rational and idealistic.

Classical beauty of harmony is different from modern sublime. Modern sublime puts stress on contradiction, struggle, and conflict. It is fierce, turbulent and unstable. However, classical beauty of harmony puts stress on relation and infiltration between both aspects of contradiction. So it is peaceful, slow and tranquil. The sculptures of Greece's are said to be "sublimely simple", "still and mighty". The classical art of China, in general, also is pastoral. Though Chinese art emphasizes Expression and Time, require "motion in stillness" and "stillness in motion", as compared with modern arts, it is simple and still, too. People's feeling from the sublime at first is oppressive, unharmonious, and unfree; but since it is maintained in the field of aesthetics, this depression must be transferred into liberation, this unharmony and unliberty must be transferred into harmony and liberty. People's feeling from sublime art is complicated, and contradictory for sublime art itself possesses the quality of transition. But classical

art of beauty, since it is simple and still, since it stresses balance, steadiness and harmony, would let people produce the feelings of liberty, happiness and harmony. Classical art of beauty is different from the art of modern sublime, the latter is individual, but the former seeks an example beauty or beauty specimen. The painter in Greece absorbed the merits from a large number of beautiful girls to create The Queen Helen. Obviously, this Helen is a specimen of beauty. In China, there was a poem titled "DongTuzi wallows in the pleasure with woman," in which a girl was so beautiful that "adding a little would be too long, cutting off a little would be too short, offering her a little white make-up would be too pale, offering her a little red made-up would be too red". This "just right" beauty was created exactly according to the classical ideal of harmonious beauty.

The classical ideal of harmonious beauty reflects people's moral ethnical and social political ideal in ancient society. In ancient society, people's ideal was to become a complete person who would maintain harmonious relations with nature and society. The appearance of such ideal: people would lead to high moral ethics and the development of social harmony; then, millenium would become a reality. In about 800-200 B.C., some Chinese had already emphasized the problem of the harmony of subject and object in regard to people's physiological response to such things as sound, colour, smell and so on. Later, Confucius pointed out, from a view of nature, the harmony between people and the nature, and between people and the cosmos. The goal was to reach the harmony of soul – of people – of politics.

The idea of harmonious beauty is related to the closed small production economy and social structure and the way of class struggle in ancient China; and at the sometimes it is related very closely to the ancient simple ideology of dialectics. In ancient society, all of the conflicting elements such as people and nature, individual and society, the subject and the object, the flesh and soul, the soul and things had not been completely divided. People in ancient society sweepingly recognized things with simple dialectics. They did not try to recognize all things in the way of qualitative analysis, though they had seen the difference and distinction among things. They paid more attention to relations than conflicts between contradictory things. So, they held "harmony" as the lofty ideal and the highest standard to estimate and judge everything. In the field of ethical morality, it the physiological and the psychological, the ethical and the psychological, the individual and society become harmonious, it is "Virtue". In the field of philosophy, if contradictory things do not go to the extreme, it is "Truth". In the field of production, if the feminine in nature and the masculine in nature become harmonious, it would be a year of bumper harvest; Harmony is healthful. Unharmony is disaster and disease. In the field of social politics, the highest ideal is harmony among kings, statesmen and the common people. It

would be a great peaceful society. In general, "harmony" is a central idea of philosophy, ethics and politics in ancient society. As an aesthetical idea related to philosophy, ethics and political ideal, "harmony" is also inevitably held as the ideal of classical beauty and art.

### **Ideal of classical beauty of harmony**

No matter where, in the west or in the east, in China or in Europe, in regard to things, people in ancient society seldom said "beautiful" or "not beautiful", but they often said "harmonious" or "unharmonious". To them, harmony was beauty. In the west, in the sixth-seventh centuries, B.C., the Pythagoras school of thought offered the idea that beauty was harmony. They considered "number" as the origin of all things in the world. They studied music from the view point of "number", pointing out that the beauty of music is composed of harmonious relationship of different sounds. They also studied sculptures from the same view point. Of course, the harmony that the Pythagoras school of thought talked about is more in the form of perception. But the influence of this viewpoint lasted for a very long time. Later, it became the goal and ideal of all classical arts in Europe.

Plato and Aristotle inherited and deepened the thinking of beauty being harmony from the Pythagoras school of thought. However, their inheritances are in different way. From a view of idealism, Plato held that beauty is Idea. Aristotle disagreed with his teacher's opinion and held that beauty is in form. Though their viewpoints were different, yet they both thought that beauty is harmony; only harmonious things are beautiful.

Plato was the founder of idealistic aesthetics and Aristotle was the founder of materialistic aesthetics. Their aesthetical ideas were in opposition to each other. Their ideas had their respective inheritors with different ideology. But it was common for their inheritors to regard harmony as beauty. Plato's inheritors such as Plotinus in ancient Rome, Saint Augustinus and Saint Thomas Aquinas in the Middle Ages, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, and H. Wolff and A.G. Baumgarten in Germany, all accepted the idea that beauty is harmony. Plotinus was the founder of New Platonism. He inherited the thinking of Plato's directly and regarded the Idea as the origin of beauty. On the one hand, Plotinus inherited Aristotle's view that beauty is in form, on the other hand, he also thought that the harmony of form is not in things themselves, but from the Idea. According to the Idea, all parts of things are prearranged and then become a harmonious unity. The Idea is the reason of beauty as beauty, for the Idea has to be controlled by God; so God is the last reason of beauty. Saint Augustinus held that beauty is the "Suitability". He said, beauty itself should be suitable. The "Suitability" is harmony, for he said that the "Suitability" was like the situation that the shoes were suitable for one's legs. That is, the objective is suitable for the subjective. Saint Thomas Aquinas held that "the Harmony",

"the Completeness" and "the Brightness" are the three elements of beauty. Among the three elements, the Harmony is the most important. Then the Completeness and the Brightness only are sensitive present, which are not related with the quality of beauty defined rationally. Saint Augustinus and Saint Thomas Aquinas both were theologians. They believed the beauty was from the God. Augustinus said, the beauty was the glory of God. Aquinas said, the God was master of the beauty. Their religious aesthetics was the interpretation for the harmonious beauty of form from theological teleology. They thought, there was a first original type among all of the things in the world. The God created all things according to their type. The things were different because they were from types. Here, Plato's Idea had been changed to God. Leibnitz, the founder of rational aesthetics in Germany, held clearly: that the beauty was the predetermined harmony. He pointed out that the thinking was like a big clock, in which all the parts had their respective tasks; when they were arranged properly, a complete unity would be formed. This predetermined harmony was the beauty. H. Wolff, another philosopher of rational school in Germany, offered the theory that the beauty was the completeness. The completeness in meaning is like the unity of different things, so "The theory of Harmony" and "The theory of Completeness" are similar qualitatively. Based on these theories, A.G. Baumgarten offered the theory of perceptual completeness. He held that the beauty was the completeness recognized by people's sense-organs, and incompleteness was ugly.

Aesthetically, this completeness is a harmonious unity of content, order, and expression. Though A.G. Baumgarten emphasized that the beauty was the completeness too, which is similar to the Rational School; yet he paid attention to the sensitive elements of formal beauty, in which he received the influence from the Experimental Aesthetics. He attempted to combine the rational with the sensitive. So there are some elements of modern aesthetics in A.G. Baumgarten's aesthetical thinking, though his theory basically belongs to the classical aesthetics. His theory enlightened Kant, and was the forerunner of Kant's aesthetic thinking. From the way of thinking, the aesthetics of Rational School in Germany, Plato's, Plotinus' ideas and the aesthetics in the Middle Ages are similar, for they defined the essence of beauty either from the Idea, or God, or the priori Ration and looked upon the free harmony as the beauty. Certainly, there are differences among them: e.g. Plato's Idea is mystical. The philosophers of Rational School also held the Ration is priori. But they stressed that only people have the Ration. It is anti-theological, from which the advanced thinking of the bourgeoisie is shown. So there is a new quality that shows the aesthetical transfer from ancient times to modern times. In the aesthetics of the Rational School, most of them were material aestheticians who inherited Aristotle's aesthetic thinking. In the Middle Ages, Aristotle's thinking was transformed to the religious



theology by Plotinus and Saint Thomas Aquinas. Aristotle was not as famous as Plato, but he became very in the Renaissance. In the Renaissance, Aristotle was a banner of aesthetical thinking. Many artists' ideas were from Aristotle's : Leonardo da Vinci and Raphael Santi studies more about formal beauty and deemed that the aesthetic pleasure that people got was from the harmonious arrangement of formal elements of things. In the eighteenth century, the British painter William Hogarth wrote "The Analysis of Beauty" in which he researched into formal beauty and offered the aesthetical principal of "The Changing in good order". German historian of art Winckelmann also considered in his "History of Ancient Modelling Arts" that the beauty of modelling art was composed of circle lines. In general, from the times of Aristotle to the Renaissance, the harmonious beauty of form was the center to which aestheticians and artists paid more attention. The rise of experiential aesthetics in Britain was an important turn. It showed that philosophy and aesthetics began to come close to natural science. E. Burke held that beauty was the feeling of pleasure, based on biology. It seemed to Burke, beauty was a feeling of love or something similar to love. How do people get physiological pleasure? He held that their aesthetical pleasure came from the appearance of some aesthetical character of objective things such as "Little", "Weak", "Smooth", "Gradually Changing", etc. Burke's idea was materialistic. Burke disagreed with both the theory of the completeness of the rational school and the theory of Aristotle's that the beauty is proportional symmetry. His theory seems to depart from the harmonious idea. But in fact, the center of the theory of pleasure is also harmony; it merely sees harmony from a different angle. The harmony of the Experiential School is certainly different from other aestheticians. The beauty in the Experiential School is the harmonious relation between the objectives character and subjective experience of aesthetics. It is with this harmony that people produce the feeling of love, and of sensitive pleasure. Therefore, we can say that "beauty is harmony" is still the main idea of Experiential School. In the history of aesthetics, D. Diderot's theory of relation is more profound than Burke's theory of pleasure. D. Diderot said : "I regard all the things which are able to awake the concept of relation in my soul as beauty;" and the beauty of art only is the reflection on that objective beauty. D. Diderot thought that there are three relations, i.e. three kinds beauties : Firstly, the substantive relation which presents objective things themselves: It is the substantive beauty such as the beauty of a flower or a fish. This beauty is a relation on which the order and symmetry of things are reflected. Secondly, the comparative relation : It is not a relation in things themselves, but it is a relation in the comparison between things that the beauty is seen. Then, this is a relative beauty e.g. this flower is beautiful and this fish is beautiful; they are not beautiful by themselves, but through comparison with another flower and another fish. D. Diderot deemed, in this relation, the more relative ideas are awaked in the thing,

the more beautiful the thing would be. Thirdly, the fictitious relation: it mainly refers to the fictitiousness in art; i.e. the beauty of art. There are not these relations in objective things. They seem to be given to things by the soul people. For example, when a artist creates a sculpture, his imagination is faster than his shisel; and where he cuts off the unnecessary parts of the marble, then an imaginarily living figure is made. The fictitious relation in art that D.Diderot said is based on the objective things, though it is the product of people's imagination. The fictitious relation simply is another way of the substantive relation. Since there the many deep contents in the Diderot's theory of Relation, he raised the formal aesthetics of materialism to a new height. On the other hand, D. Diderot emphasized the idea that beauty is a relation in people's comprehension, and pushed the ideal element of aesthetical feeling forward, which surpassed Burke's theory of physiological feeling of pleasure. It shows that D. Diderot's aesthetical thinking not only developed the aesthetical thinking of the Experiential School, but also absorbed some good elements from the Rational School. The ideas of the Experiential School and the Rational School began to combine with each other and became the basis of later German classical aesthetics.

In the history of aesthetics in the West, aestheticians had common character which held the aesthetical ideal of classicalism i.e. beauty is harmony, though they had different viewpoints in regard to the essence of aesthetics.

In the East, the same character of aesthetics existed in the feudalistic times, e.g. in China, the harmonious beauty was regarded as the highest ideal of classical arts. "ShanShu Yao Dian" (a book written in about 1000 B.C.) had taken the idea "Different sounds" become harmonious, "people and the gods become harmonious" "Different sounds" means different musical instruments on which different sounds may be made. But the free movements of harmony that people use those musical instruments to play are able to let the relation of people and the Gods become harmonious. This at that time reflected the vogue of the witchcraft, and music was used to reconcile the relation of people and Gods. Of course, the stress of this idea is in the beauty of form. Confucius developed the theory about harmony. He put stress on the harmony of morality and feeling. It made the theory of harmony go forward from the mere form aspect to the content aspect. Confucius said: "Pleased, but not to be excessive; sorrow but not to be undue". He emphasized that feeling should be governed by morality, so that feeling and reason become harmonious. The thinking of Confucius is the main ideology in Chinese feudalistic society. Reject the dross in it, from a view of aesthetics, the thinking of Confucius is just a harmonious beauty of the unity of morality and feeling.

"The feminine in nature" and "The masculine in nature" are two ancient concepts in Chinese classical philosophy. The people in ancient times said: "The feminine and the masculine are the basis of every thing." Stillness is the feminine, and movement is the masculine; therefore, the scholars in China deemed that there are the beauty of the feminine and the beauty of the masculine. "If the feminine and the masculine are harmonious, the soul will be vigorous". The feminine and the masculine are not separated from each other, between which there is a relation of dynamic balance. They also stand for two mode of harmonious beauty in ancient China: the beauty of the feminine – the graceful beauty, the beauty of the masculine – the vigorous beauty. The dynamic balance of the feminine and the masculine were sought by ancient Chinese not only for all of living things, but also for the beauty. The thinking of "Harmony" is the basic character of Chinese classical philosophy, and of Chinese class aesthetics too.

From the above, we can say that it is common for the classical aesthetics of both the east and the west to pursue the harmonious beauty, though there are different stresses between them. It is for same aesthetical ideal of class aesthetics that there is an essential distinction between the aesthetics of feudalism and the aesthetics of the bourgeoisie.

## II

### **The idea of the art essence in the classical aesthetics.**

As the ideal of ancient arts, the classical harmonious beauty is referred to make the balance, harmony, steadiness, organic unity between opposite elements of art such as the representation and expression, the object and the subject, the ideal and the reality, the feeling and the reason, the time and the space in art work. As an idea, the harmonious beauty is just the essence of art that ancient people got from artistic practices. As an ideal, ancient arts were produced generally according to the principle of the harmonious beauty. So the artistic ideal and artistic practices of harmony are identical. But it is very different from the modern idea of artistic essence and the modern arts of sublime mode. The classical arts of harmonious beauty could not include the modern arts of romanticism or realism that were developed towards the different extremes of united beauty of harmony, for the classical arts was required to relate, permeate one another among the artistic elements. Therefore, it is classical aesthetics and art. There are different meanings in the concept of "Classicism". Generally, the meaning of classical art is an example quality, e.g. the poems by Li Bai or Du Fu in the Tang dynasty of China are considered to belong to classical poems. Classicism also means the aesthetic trend and art type which appeared in Europe in the seventeenth century. Here, this concept I use includes all of the leading aesthetical thinkings artistic phenomena in the slave society and the feudal society. The great controversy about Romanticism and Classicism started and developed by J.W. Goethe

and J.C.F. Schiller which lasted several years in Europe is, in fact a great controversy between the modern aesthetics of the bourgeoisie and the classical aesthetics of the slave society and feudalism. Boileau-Despreaux's "The art of poem" is identical with Aristotle's "Poetics" virtually, though the former is more rational and more normal than the latter in a new social situation. They were identical too in the practices of art, e.g., there were many conclusions of great reunion in the classical theatres of China; and so were they in the classical theatres of Europe in the seventeenth century. In short, it is a historical type of arts and a historical pattern of aesthetics. The arts of classicism are the same both in the west from ancient Greece to the Age of Enlightenment and in China from Before Ch'in dynasty to the Ch'ing dynasty.

1. The classical arts of harmonious beauty required the unity of the representation and the expression, the object and the subject; and to have rich representative, imitative elements in the expressive arts and to have rich expressive, lyric elements in the representative arts. Unlike the modern aesthetics and arts which set the representation and the expression against each other, the quality of the classical aesthetics and arts is harmonious among the elements.

In the field of Chinese poem, the principle to unite "Fu", "Bi", "Xing" was offered very early. "Fu" is a style to present something directly. "Bi", and "Xing" are the style to put stress on expression and imagination. The unity of "Fu", "Bi", "Xing" is just the unity of imitation and expression, writing the reality and writing the feeling. Liuxi (about 465-520 A.D.) in the Liang dynasty said: "The spirit is expressed with images, in which feeling is included. The thing is known through the appearance; the information is exchanged through feeling". His view to unite the spirit and the thing, the form and the content, the reason and the emotion harmoniously stands for the aesthetic ideal of classical arts before the Middle Tang dynasty in China (about 750 A.D.). After the Middle Tang dynasty, painting was considered to be more important than poetry. In other words, the expression was considered to be more important than the representation in the work of art. But it is a reaction to the former idea that poetry is the most important among all of arts. Shu Dongbo (1037-1101 A.D.) in the Sung dynasty pointed out: "The qualities of painting and poetry are same". "There is painting in a poem; and there is poetry in a painting". This idea summarizes the basic character of the classical art and aesthetics in China.

It was so in China, and there was no exception in the West. In ancient Greece, the painting was regarded as a "Silent poem"; and the poem was regarded as a "voiced painting". In the Renaissance, Leonardo da Vinci said: "The painting is a dumb poem; and the poem is a blind painting. "Originally, painting and poetry are two different

forms of art: poem is among the arts using words, expressive and lyrical; but painting is a typical art of representation. Here, certainly, the concepts of painting and poetry mean not only the types of art, but also two different categories of aesthetics. Poetry is looked upon as "representation". What Shu DongBo said that there is painting in a poem and there is poetry in a painting shows that there is expression in the representation and there is representation in the expression. There was a common quality of aesthetics between the lyric poem and imitating painting in the times of classical beauty of harmony i.e. "the qualities of painting and poetry are the same".

There is a distinct difference between Chinese arts and western arts. The classical aesthetics and arts in ancient China laid particular stress on expression; and the classical aesthetics and arts in the West laid particular stress on representation. But the Chinese aesthetics and arts did not exclude representation; and the Western aesthetics and arts did not exclude expression. They were not in opposition to each other, nor did they negate each other. They were never separated from each other. Of course, they were different. Their difference laid only in the different quantity and different leading role based on harmony. The basis of Chinese arts is poetry, which pays more attention to expression and lyricism. Its representation is practised through expression. The basis of the Western arts is painting, which pays more attention to representation and imitation. Its expression is practised through representation.

Originally, poetry is more expressive, and stresses the creation of conception. Painting is more representative, and stresses the presentation of images. However, since classical aesthetics emphasized the unity of representation and expression, in China, the images also were presented in poetry—it was so-called "presenting something which was difficult to say as if it was front of you"; artistic conception was also pursued in painting—it was so-called "the highest value in painting is the artistic conception". From this view, the image and the artistic conception in art were united harmoniously. The theatre and the novel were originally more representative, and were required to express feelings through images. But in the classical theatre and novel of China, there were many elements of expression, though the representative elements of these kinds of art were much large in amount than those of poetry. Wang Guowee (1877-1927 A.D.) in the Ch'ing dynasty pointed out that there was artistic conception in poetic drama in the Yuan dynasty. The realistic novel "Dream of The red mansion" in which there is rich critical colour of the modern times is, on the one hand, a real picture depicting the life of the feudal nobles, and on the other hand, a lyric expressing deep feelings. If it is compared with the novels by Honore de Balzac, we will see that the novel has wonderful artistic conception which cannot be found in Balzac's novels.

The unity of the representation and expression, the subject and object is both integrative and separate. For example, in the Chinese theatre, the actor is required to play the role that he acts and also to be the actor himself. There is a distance between the actor and the role, the audience and the stage. The actor knows that he is acting in a play; and the audiences know that they are watching a play. It is very different from the realistic theatre where the actor is required to enter the role entirely and forget himself completely. This view is the classical view of aesthetics and arts.

2. The relation between the representation and expression, the object and the subject defines the relation between the ideal and the reality in art too. In classicism, the ideal and the reality are required to be united simply and harmoniously. On the one hand, it is satisfied with the ideal in the reality and would not like to pursue something beyond the reality; on the other hand, it does not think the beauty in the reality to be sufficient and would like to collect the scattered beauty in the reality so that a complete beauty is created. Beyond doubt, the classical beauty of harmony which is created as above is both real and ideal. It is real, because the elements which form the beauty are able to be found in the reality and nothing is beyond the reality. It is ideal, because there is nothing in the reality to tally with the standard beauty. Because of this reason, the art work in China or in Greece very seldom use only one model. The characters that artists create in art work are like what Lu Xun said: "Take the different elements from reality to form a whole". Schiller's theory of the difference between the simple poem and the sentimental poem is essentially a distinction drawn between ancient art and modern art, between classical art of harmonious beauty and modern art of the sublime. People in the ancient times did not know the division of the ideal and the reality. Their ideal was in the reality; and their reality also satisfied their ideal. So the simple poem that they created was to unite the reality and ideal harmoniously. No sharp opposition between the reality and the ideal existed until the appearance of modern sentimental poems. Schiller's theory basically summarized the main character of classical aesthetics and arts in the West.

### III

#### **The harmony of imagination and thought, feeling and reason.**

The representation of object is related with the reason and the thought directly; and the expression of subject is more closely related with the feeling and imagination. Therefore, the harmony of the representative and the expressive, the subject and the object in classical beauty and art also conditions the harmonious unity of the feeling and the reason, the imagination and the thought. The unity of the feeling and the reason is a traditional idea of Chinese classical aesthetics. In the Chun-Chou period (about 500 B.C.),

Confucius pointed out "Happy but not to be excessive, sad but not to be harmful." It is his view to deal with the problem of the feeling and the reason. There were two stages in the poetic aesthetics of ancient China—"poetry expresses will" and "poetry expresses feeling". In the former stage, under the principle of expression, poetry laid greater stress on representation and imitation; and put greater emphasis on "the expression will". What is "will"? Will is reason, but it is based on feeling. With the development of the representation and imitation, the theory of expressing feeling gradually replaced the theory of expressing will. The feeling means individual emotion and sense; and greater stress was put on the lyric and imagination. Liu Xie (about 465-520 A.D.) in the Liang dynasty wrote a lot on the imagination in his book *Wen Xin Diao Long*. He pointed out the internal relation between expressing feeling and imagination. Then, though the feeling and imagination were stressed, the reason and thought were not looked down upon; but there was the reason in the feeling; just as what Yan Yu in the Sung dynasty said. "There are special subject matter for poetry, which are not related with knowledge; there are special tastes in poetry, which are not related with the reason. But ancient poets also read books and learn the reasons, however, the appreciators could find nothing about the reason and the knowledge from the books in his poems. The poetry like this is first class poetry". What he said is a typically classical art that the feeling and the reason are in balance.

The same thing can be found in the aesthetic thinking of ancient Greece. e.g. Socrates required artists both "to make graceful image," and "to depict the soul of people". Aristotle also emphasized imitating and learning, laid at the same time stress on the task of tragedy—the catharsis of emotion.

Representation and expression in art are closely related with the space and time. Generally speaking, the representative art put more stress on the space, in which the time is fixed on the space, and is spatial. The expressive art put more stress on the time, in which the space moves with the time, and is timing. The representative art stresses the objective time and space of physics. The expressive art stresses the subjective time and space of psychology. Since the classical aesthetics seeks the harmonious unity of the representation and expression, it emphasizes both the time spatial and the space timing, both the objective time and space of physics, and the subjective time and space of psychology. In short, the time and space should be in balance and harmonious. In the eyes of the western people, the classical aesthetics and art in China is put more emphasis on the aesthetics and art of expression. Its elements of the representation are based on the expression. Therefore, the idea of the time and space in classical aesthetics of China is more subjective and free, putting greater stress on the consciousness of time and the idea of movement. For example, in ancient paintings in China, there were often many

things in a picture, in fact, which could be seen according to the normal way of perspective. In Wang Wei's (about 701-761 A.D.) painting "Yuan-an lying on the snow", even the flowers which came into bloom only in summer appeared in the picture. The same is true of other types of art in China. In general, it is the main trend of classical aesthetics and arts of China to change Still into Movement, to change Space into Time, to change Representation into Expression; and to unite the representation and space on the basis of the expression and time.

In contrast with the classical arts of China, the classical arts of the west lay stress on the representation and space. They unite the elements of the expression, ideal and time on which the representation, sense and space are based. Their taste is to make the time spatial. Their element of the time is hinted in the moving trend of the space. Their objects are arranged according to the principle of the nature, sense and recognition. For example, the painting in the west pays more attention to seeking the truth. It is required to paint picture by the strict perspective. In the picture, the view is fixed, and cannot be moved and fabricated freely. Leonardo da Vinci who held the classically representative tradition of the west required artists to present the reality as in a mirror. He suggested that artists learn from nature, and study the knowledge of the perspective, the proportion, anatomy, zoology and botany; so that they could paint as realistically as the truth. The classical arts in China are the arts of the time. The classical aesthetics in China is the aesthetics of the time. The classical arts in the west are the arts of the space. The classical aesthetics in the west is the aesthetics space. But this conclusion comes only from the comparison between the characteristics of the two. In essence, the classical aesthetics and art both in China and in the west put stress on the balance and harmony of the object and subject, the time and the space.

Because of the requirement to unite the representation and expression, the classical arts also is sought to be the harmonious unity of the content and form. In China, Confucius advanced the idea of the unity of the content and form. He said: "the content over the form is crude, the form over the content is garish; the harmony of the content and form is the best." Since Confucius, his idea about the content and form had always been accepted by aestheticians and artists from generation to generation. The classical aesthetics of the west also has the same thinking: Aristotle emphasized the united beauty of the content and form etc. Nicolas Boileau-Despreaux in his "The Art of Poetry" still said: "No matter what subject matter is written—solemn or jokingly, artists should coordinate the reason and rhyme harmoniously. Because this unity was stressed, there appeared a strange phenomenon in the field of aesthetics: Originally, the expression and form were laid stress on in Chinese arts, e.g. the books about the theory of poetry, of penmanship, of



painting devoted a great number of pages to present the unity of content and form; but the harmonious beauty as the ideal of beauty pursued in the feudal society of China put stress on the harmony of the political and the ethical, the ethical and the psychological. All of these elements belong to the content. In contrast to this, the representation and the content were laid stress on in the arts of the west, e.g. from the theory of imitation by Aristotle to the theory of "the mirror" by Leonardo da Vinci and Miguel de Cervantes, the content and representation were always emphasized. But the idea that the beauty is in the harmony of form, from the School of Pythagoras to Kant was a traditional ideal of the beauty. Perhaps, these states was to stress the harmonious unity of the beauty in the content and the beauty in the form.

The ideal of classical aesthetics and arts to unite the representation and expression, the content and form harmoniously also conditioned the unity of the function that expressed the feeling and the function that recognized the things of artistic mediums harmoniously. Originally, the function of recognition of artistic mediums was stressed in the art of the representation; the function of expressing of artistic mediums was stressed in the art of the expression. But in the classical art of beauty, the function of expressing of artistic mediums was stressed in the art of the representation, and the function of recognition of artistic mediums was stressed in the art of the expression, for the aim of the harmonious beauty. For example, the colour whose function of recognition was strong was not emphasized in the classical painting of China; but the line whose function of expressing was strong was stressed. Similarly, as literature, the qualities of music and expressing in Chinese poetry also were specially stressed. On the other hand, in the artistic mediums was laid stress on. The classical music of China laid greater stress on the vocal music than on the instrumental music. The instrumental music in ancient China stressed the imitation of the voice of people, which made the instrumental music very much like the vocal music. In the classical dance of China, greater stress was put on imitation than on expression. The classical arts in the west was no exception. In general, the function of expression of artistic mediums was stressed in the east, meanwhile, the function of recognition of artistic mediums was stressed in the west. Therefore, the Chinese art can be said to be the art of the line; the western art can be said to be the art of the colour and light.

The harmonious unity of representation and expression, the beauty of the content and the beauty of the form in the classical arts is more aesthetic in character. The appreciator is able to get more pleasure from it than from the modern art of the sublime, though there is much more force in the modern art of the sublime, which is able to move people's soul and from which people are able to get more truth and wisdom. Of course, this harmonious unity of the beauty of the content and beauty of the form in the classical

art is a simple unity, which is a historical and restricted beauty as compared with the new harmonious beauty in the socialist age.

#### IV

**The classical art puts stress on the unity of truth, virtue and beauty; on the harmony of appreciation, recognition and morality in art.**

1. The expressive art stressed the unity of beauty and virtue; the representative art stressed the unity of the beauty and the truth. The ideal of the classical beauty of harmony was to unite the truth, the virtue and the beauty harmoniously. The classical art in China was expressive. The classical aesthetics in China was the aesthetics which laid stress on the ethics and psychology. In the classical aesthetics in China, the beauty was always related with the man, the society and the morality, and stressed the unite of the beauty and the virtue. At first, Confucius was the first to point out the ideal of "the beauty of perfection". He paid close attention to the social functions of art. From the view of the social functions of art, he associated poetry and music with ethics and politics; and deemed that poetry and music could serve the aim of ethics and politics. Bai JuYi (772-846 A.D.), a great poet in the Tang dynasty, considered that poetry could be used to "know the society and lead people's feelings", through which "the information could be understood by the leaders and common people." From poetry and music the people will be able to know the whether political policies are good or bad; here is the function of recognition in poetry and music. The essence of music is expressive, in which the feelings and the sounds are united directly; and the content breezes in its form. It is not the strong point of music to mimic the objective reality. But in China, music was required to imitate the objective things for a long time. For example, the statement "to mimic the things that appeared" was written in "The Music Book", the first book about the music theory in China, more than 2300 years ago. This idea became a traditional thinking of aesthetics later. So the quality of imitation in the classical music in China is very distinct e.g. "The Night with Flowers on the River in the Spring", "All of the Bieds fly towards the Phoenix", etc; in these music works, the people were presented; or the natural scenery was depicted; or the singing of birds was represented.

Classical aesthetics and arts in China required the unity of the feeling and reason. This reason was also related to the objective rules of the nature and cosmos, though its stress was laid on the moral principles. The virtue of feudal ethics and morality was thought to be inevitable truth in ancient China. The truth was presented through the virtue, which was an important characteristic in the aesthetic culture of China. Therefore, the unity of the feeling and reason is just the simple unity of the truth, the virtue, the beauty in harmony and balance.

In the west, the art in ancient Greece was a more representative art; the aesthetics in ancient Greece was more the aesthetics stressed on the recognition. It always related the beauty with the object, the nature and the sciences; and emphasized the unity of the beauty and the truth. Aristotle was the founder of the classical aesthetics of the west. He offered the principle of stressing imitation and representation, and the unity of the beauty and the truth in his "Poetics". He abandoned "the Idea" offered by Plato, and deemed that the truth is in the reality. The truth which he said was the objective appearance and rules of the world in a general way. He said : "The task of a poet is not to describe the things that had happened, but to describe the things that may happen according to the principle of necessity and possibility". He thought, the distinction between a poet and the historian is that "the historian describe the things that have happened, and the poet describe the things that may happened. So, poetry is more philosophical and more solemn than history, because what are presented in poems are most in universal, and what are presented in history are specific things". This trend of stressing the representation, reason and truth had a great influence on western aesthetics. New classicalist Nicolas Boileau-Despreaux looked on the "reason" as the standard of poetry, and suggested that the poet must first of all love the reason. He considered that : "Only the truth is beautiful; only the truth is lovely. The truth should rule over everything". Though the unity of the beauty and truth was stressed in western aesthetics, the virtue in art was not abandoned and denied. Meanwhile, the deep relation between the art and the morality was not ignored. The Pythagoras School of thought related the beauty of music with the harmonious structure of mathematics in the cosmos; and Socrates united the beauty with the virtue much more closely. Plato, on the one hand, classified the beauty as the absolute idea, and on the other hand, emphasized the ethical function of art in the society. Because of this reason, he suggested to drive the poets out of his PUBLIC. Aristotle and the others held the similar idea on the relation of the beauty and virtue. In short, the truth, virtue and beauty in the classical aesthetics of the west also are united, though this unity is different from that of China. In China, the medium is the truth; and in the west, the medium is the virtue. It seemed to the western aestheticians, only the truth is beautiful and virtuous ; that something which is not true is not beautiful and virtuous.

2. In the classical aesthetical aesthetics and arts, the truth, the virtue and beauty were united harmoniously. This basic characteristic also determined the harmonious unity of the functions of recognition, ethics and appreciating beauty. Confucius was the first scholar who offered the concepts of "Xing", "Guan", "Chung", and "Yuan", and tried to unite the functions in art. "Xing" is the characteristic of art and art action, which includes the images and feeling content, it is the aesthetic function of art. "Guan" is the

function of recognition in art which lays stress on the reason. "Guan" is to watch the prosperity or decline of a state or society through the change of people's feelings and spirit. "Chung" and "Yuan" put stress on the united function in art. "Chung" is to let people unite together. "Yuan" is to criticise the leaders for their poor policies. The aim of the two is the same, i.e. to let the people themselves or the people and the leaders be harmonious. So "Xing", "Guan", "Chuang", "Yuan", emphasize the unity of the aesthetic functions and the recognitive function and the educational function in art. In the Han dynasty, the people pointed out the three concepts "Feng", "Ya", "Shung" as the requirements for the function of art. What is "Feng"? There are two meanings in this concept. The first is to move people's feelings. The second is to educate people. What is "Ya"? "Ya" is to comment on the prosperity or decline of the government. What is "Shung"? "Shung" is to praise success the leaders and tell what the leaders have accomplished to the gods. There is a common point in "Ya" and "Shung", there are, on the one hand, the content of the politics and society, and on the other hand, the meaning of recognition and reason. They are very different from "Feng". "Feng" lays greater stress on the individual and emotion. But "Ya" and "Shung" lays greater stress on the political affairs and recognition. The unity of "Feng", "Ya" and "Shung" is the unity of the aesthetical function, recognitive function and educational function. It is the unity of the feeling function and reason function. Of course, particular stress is laid on certain aspects in this unity. Since the unity of the beauty and virtue was emphasized in the classical aesthetics and arts of China, more attention was paid to the unity of aesthetical function and educational function. "Educating in playing" is a traditional principle in the classical aesthetics of China. Political education is stressed; but the method is to exist imperceptible influence, and not to pour exhortations into somebody's ears. People are educated in artistic activities. The method is also to exist imperceptible influence. The aesthetical appreciation was important for the classical art in ancient China. A painting could be watched for several day, and a play could be appreciated for more than ten times or a hundred times. While people appreciated the work of art, they were educated unconsciously. Though the classical aesthetics in ancient Greece laid more stress on the essence of art, which was unlike that of China, greater stress was laid on the function of art, but the function of art was not ignored. Plato criticised Homer's epic from the view of strong utilitarianism.

## V

### Strong beauty and grace

1. There are two types in the classical beauty and art of harmony : the one is the strong beauty, the other is the grace, i.e. a masculine beauty and a feminine beauty.

As classical beauties, the strong beauty and grace are both sought to be harmonious in the

opposition as compared with the sublime. But on this basis, there are two types in the beauty : the strong beauty and grace, in which the different characteristics are included. Relatively, the strong beauty is more opposite, in which there are more elements of the antithesis and solemn. The grace is more harmonious, in which there are more elements of the balance and harmony. The strong beauty is vigorous, moving. The grace is gentle, still. The strong beauty is towards the unlimited, the subject and the reason. The grace is in the limited, the object and the sense. In the sensitive character, the strong beauty is high, square; the grace is little, round. In the feeling for the strong beauty, there is a high-spirited and roused experience in the aesthetical liberty. In the feeling for grace, there is a simple enjoyment of pleasure and tranquility.

2. But the strong beauty of the classicalism is different from the modern sublime. The modern sublime is based on the separation of the subject and object, the opposition of the social classes. Its quality is opposite in the unity. The strong beauty is based on the harmony of the subject and object, the class struggle of the classicalism; there are more elements of antithesis in it. The strong beauty could never break through the classical circle of harmony, and reach the essentially opposite stage as the modern sublime. In the classical beauty, the rigid and gentle are not separated. The strong beauty is to unite the rigid and the gentle, but in which the rigid is primary. The Grace also is to unite the rigid and the gentle, but in which the gentle is primary. The rigid and the gentle are not entirely separated until the modern sublime which receives the rigid and abandons the gentle. Though the strong beauty is towards the unlimited, the subject, its unlimitedness is always related with the limited. There are more subjective elements in the strong beauty. But this subject is not separated from the object completely. The subject sometimes includes the object, and sometimes is melted in the object and meanwhile surpasses the object. The unlimited and subject of the modern sublime is not reached. Though the perceptual character of the strong beauty is high and square, in the classical beauty, the square and circle are also to unite with each other: there is the circle in the square, and there is the square in the circle; both of them are not towards the extreme. The strong beauty is always required to follow the rules of the formal beauty. But the sublime is stressed to be unharmonious and unbalanced, which breaks up the rules of the formal beauty. Though there is the high-spirited feeling in the strong beauty, it is free and pleasing. But in the sublime, the high-spirited feeling includes the feeling of pain, which is unfree. Schiller said that the beauty is free; the sublime needs to have a jump in order to reach the stage of liberty.

3. The strong beauty and grace are the opposite categories in logic; they are also the developing categories in history. They are the still modes which stand side by side in the beauty; they are also the moving modes in the aesthetical history. In China, there are

three stages in the development of the classical beauty of harmony. Before the Tang dynasty, the strong beauty was primary. After the Late Tang dynasty, the grace became primary. With the rise of the romantic thinking of aesthetics in the Middle Ming dynasty, the element of the modern sublime was sprouted.

Before the Middle Tang dynasty, the strong beauty played the dominating role though the strong beauty and grace existed side. It was thought that the aesthetical value of the strong beauty was much higher than grace. Mencius (about 390-305 B.C.) deemed: "The substantial is beautiful. Both substantial and bright are great." It might be the first exploration of the characteristics of the strong beauty and grace. This "great" has the quality of "bright" which "the substantial" beauty does not possess. Obviously, the "great" has higher value than "the substantial"; i.e. the strong beauty is higher than grace. Zhuang Zi (about 369-286 B.C.) was also a eulogist and advocator of "the Great Beauty". He once criticised something: "It is beautiful; but it is not great." He considered that "great" is higher than "beauty". Mencius' "great beauty" is very different from that of Zhuang Zi's, though both of them advocated the strong beauty. Mencius laid stress on the subjective greatness in ethical moral quality. This subject in moral ethical quality includes the social content, though its appearance is individual. This kind of the beauty are solemn, dignified, upright and unaffected. However, Zhuang Zi laid stress on the assimilation of the subject and nature, but at the same time, the subject surpassed nature. It is free state, which surpassed ethics and utility. The arts before the Middle Tang dynasty were influenced by Mencius and Zhuang Zi greatly. Generally speaking, these arts were closely related to the ideas of these two great scholars.

After the Late Tang dynasty, with the development of the feudal society from the early stage to the late stage, great occupied an increasingly dominating position, and its value gradually became higher than the strong beauty. During this stage, "The Criticism of poetry" by Shi KungDu (837-908 A.D.) in the Tang dynasty, "The Theory of the Interest" offered by Yan Yu in the Sung dynasty and "The Theory of the Romantic Charm" offered Wang Shizheng (1634-1711) in the Ch'ing dynasty were important representative art theories.

After the Middle Ming dynasty, with the beginning of capitalism, with the growth of the power of the towns people, and with the rise of the individual liberation and the enlightenment movement, the new aesthetical ideal—sublime was germinated. The classically simple harmony was broken up by the principle of the separation and opposition. The ugly in form deepened to become the ugly in essential quality; and it occupied an important position in art. Under this separation and opposition, the romantic and critical trends with modern colour became more and more distinct. Li Zhi (1527-1602 A.D.)

advocated "The mind of children"; Tang Xianzu (1550-1616 A.D.) emphasized the emotion; Shi Tao (about 1642-1718 A.D.) stressed "the ego". All of them put stress on the subject, the individual, the emotion and the spirit in the opposition of the subject and object, the individual and society, the emotion and reason. Especially, "Dream of the Red mansion" by Chao ShueCh'ing (?-1763 A.D.) became the first art work with the quality of the modern tragedy, in which the circle of the classical beauty of harmony was broken through. But the creation of art work went faster than the aesthetic theory. In the field of the aesthetical theory, the category of the sublime and the theory of the tragedy with strictly modern quality did not appear. The idea of the sublime and theory of the tragedy with modern quality was not formed until the time of Wang Guawee and Luxun. Wang Guawee and Luxun symbolized the conclusion of the classical aesthetics and the beginning of the modern aesthetics and also symbolized the end of the classical beauty and appearance of the modern sublime. They were the most important figures in the transformation from the classical beauty to the modern sublime.

In the west, there were similar laws in aesthetics in ancient Greece and Rome as in China: in the same way, there two types of beauty—the strong beauty and grace; two theories of aesthetics about the strong beauty and grace. Marcus Jullius Cicero in Rome said: "We can see, there are two types of beauty: one beauty is in the grace; another beauty is in the dignified. We should look on the grace as the female beauty, and look on dignified as the male beauty. "These beauties of the female and the male are similar with the beauties of the feminine and masculine in China. If "the Venus in Milo" is the representation of the former, "the Laocoon" will be the model of the latter. Of course, since the classical aesthetics in the west might lay stress on the rules of the objective representation and on the analytical principle of philosophy, it had more elements of the opposite and dignified than that of China in the aesthetics and arts. Its spirit of the tragedy and idea of the sublime also were stronger than that of China. In Rome, there was a book entitled "On the Sublime" by Longinus, which exerted a great influence on the aesthetics in the west. The writer stressed the great and solemn thought, the rich and creative imagination, the exciting and warm feeling, the grand and magnificent language. He deemed: "As the field for the flying of people's thinking, all of the world is not wide enough. People's soul often goes beyond the edges of the space". He again: "The style of the sublime is an echo from a great soul." Here, the elements of the subject, soul and emotion are emphasized, which broke through the classical harmony and balance. But this "sublime" is not in the modern level of the opposite. In a general way, Longinus did not go beyond the limit which Aristotle set when he said that the beauty is organic unity

of harmony. So these opposite elements are still included in the organic unity of harmony. Of course, it seems to us, Longinus would like to give a clear definition for the sublime too. But there was a long course to the time when the sublime was able to be really recognized, as Longinus could criticise the sublime only from the viewpoint of the harmonious beauty. As in ancient China, there was a developing course from the strong beauty to grace too in the west. In the early times, the strong beauty was emphasized; and the strong beauty was considered to be the grace. For example, Aristotle looked on the strong beauty as the main object of the tragedy in "Poetics", in which, the tragedy of the strong beauty was considered to be higher than the comedy of the grace. Longinus' "On the sublime" might perhaps be looked upon as the conclusion of the idea of the strong beauty in ancient Greece and Rome. Winckelmann divided the art of Greece and Rome into four stages: The first stage is in the style of primitive simplicity, whose character is forceful and firm, vigorous and unbeautiful. The second stage is in the style of "sublime" or "greatness". During this period, artists not only regarded the beauty as their main aim, but also regarded the greatness as their main aim. This style is a little rigid and angular; but also is simple and united in a high degree. In a general way, it is the strong beauty that we pointed out. The third stage is in the style of beauty, which is named the style of grace too. Its main characteristic is to present the loveliness of human body. The fourth stage is in the style of the ancients. Winckelmann considered this stage to be the decline period of art when the artists had no new creation, so they turned round to mimic the ancient beauty. This division might enlighten Hegel. In "Aesthetics", Hegel looked on the first stage as the pre-art time, the second and third stages as the classical times of art, i.e. the times of the beauty of art. But the romantic art that Hegel said had passed the Middle Ages and developed towards the modern sublime. This transformation from the classical beauty to the modern sublime took a very long time. The classical beauty did not come to a conclusion from the view the aesthetics and philosophy until Kant. Kant initiated the modern sublime; and completed the transformation in theory. Though there are two types of the beauty—the strong beauty and grace in both the east and the west, the west stresses the objective reality, contradictory opposition; therefore, there are great developments in the strong beauty and tragedy. Relatively, the grace is laid stress on in China; and the strong beauty is laid stress on in the west.

## VI

### The ideal of harmonious beauty and other aesthetic categories

In the classical aesthetics of China, since harmony is looked upon as the beauty, and the harmonious unity containing different elements is stressed, then all of composition pattern that may give rise to the unharmonious and unstable are rejected and objected. It



tries to find a suitable location between the harmonious and the unharmonious, the still and the unstillness.

Since the harmonious beauty is regarded as the ideal of the classical aesthetics in China, all of the elements of the unharmonious ugliness could not find an important position in the classical aesthetics.

The classical arts in China are the harmonious arts, in which no deep ugliness in quality can be found; so in ancient China, a modern satire and modern comedy did not exist. In the classical aesthetics and arts of China, the beauty and the ugly, the subject and the object, the individual and society are not sharply opposite to each other. Their contradiction and struggle were never driven to the extreme. Often, the contradictions were resolved when they are developed to a certain degree. So there appeared a final reunion. Because of this reason, there was no sublime in the modern sense in ancient China. The modern tragedy is based on the sublime. Since there is no sublime in the modern sense, it is not possible to have modern tragedy. Basically, the classical tragedy in China is in the strong beauty; and it does not possess the strict sublime in the modern sense.

The Ideal of the classical beauty of harmony conditions not only the classical arts in China, but also the classical arts in the west. In the aesthetics and arts of the west, since imitating the real content of the contradiction, opposition and struggle as compared with that of China, therefore, the ugly element, sublime idea, the arts of tragedy and comedy are more fully develop more divided and more protruding, though they are still within the harmonious circle of the the classical beauty, and very different from the ugly and sublime in the modern times. Hegel once said: People in ancient Greece were the free subject; in that time, people and the object were united; so "the stage that the Greeks were conscious of is the 'beautiful' stage". In the same way, we can say, ancient Chinese were in the Beautiful stage too; and ancient China was a beautiful country too. In this field of the classical beauty of harmony, the beauty was the highest principle. The ugly, the sublime, tragedy and comedy had not been separated from the beauty completely, which existed as some elements of the beauty. As above, there are the common laws in the classical aesthetics and arts in the west and in China.

Institute of Aesthetics  
Shandong University  
Republic of China

## Book Reviews

*Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, Michael Kelly, Editor in Chief, New York Oxford University Press, 4 Vols. : Vol. 1, pp. 521; Vol.2, pp.555; Vol. 3, pp.536; Vol. 4, pp. 572; the whole set published in 1998.

The present body of knowledge called "aesthetics" is a unification of numerous academic disciplines and cultures. The term "aesthetics" came into use in the eighteenth century when there was a coincidence of two philosophical tendencies – generalization about the arts and concern for sensory knowledge as independent of logical knowledge. It was situational paradox that those who generalized the arts did not use the word 'aesthetics' and those who practiced aesthetics were not primarily interested in the arts. Finally, in Kant's *Critique of Judgement* (1790) the union of the two tendencies set up the programmes for this new discipline. But what was more important for the growth of this discipline was the debate over the crucial issue whether the arts be understood and appreciated in terms of their own individual forms or by an Aristotelian generalization formula. Kelly remarks that it was the former one which dominated the eighteenth century aesthetics and differentiated it from its early history as well as from the tendencies expressed in other cultures. Eighteenth century was a turning point for another important feature, that is, secularization and democratization of art and culture, a feature which contributed a lot to the formation of a cultural public sphere.

The conceptual synonymy of *criticism* and *aesthetics* also started during this eighteenth century. Whereas the English used 'criticism' for discussions about arts and culture, the Germans transformed the word *Criticism* to *Critique*, and this transformation marked the birth of *aesthetics* as a part of philosophy highlighting the fact that philosophical aesthetics emerged out of a wide-ranging cultural context. The present *Encyclopedia* is founded on the dual roles of aesthetics – philosophical and cultural although at times, some contributors have emphasized the either role.

The Editor confesses that he took six years for compiling this encyclopedia. But the apologetic undertone sounds more ironical than factual since such a stupendous work must have taken decades for its completion unless the editor and his associates would have taken much more care than usually expected of and rendered extraordinary academic commitment spectacularly visible in the work itself. It is an academic monument carrying the fullest information about the area of knowledge concerned as it developed during the whole span of the twentieth century. The Editor and the Advisory Board have left no mark of any flaw for a reviewer to point out. There are as many as 600 entries by 450 authors, 100 illustrations, exhaustive bibliographies, cross-references and index. All the entries are meticulously contemplated and comprehensibly presented. The work both defines and describes the area of *aesthetics* in such a way that it appears most convincingly as a prison house of interacting ideas and issues – philosophical, social, psychological, linguistic, religious, political, anthropological converging on the nature, meaning and experience of all the forms of art in as many cultural contexts and periods as possible – western and non-western, ancient and modern, from Aristotle to Abhinavagupta, from Adorno to Bakhtin, from Jaaz to Video, from *ut pictura poesis* to postcolonialism, from theoretical aesthetics to aesthetics in practice. No word of praise would suffice for this extraordinary achievement in so significant a growing academic area like aesthetics.

*The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, Volume III : The Renaissance (Edited by Glyn P. Norton), 1999, pp.758; Volume IV : The Eighteenth Century (Edited by H.B. Nisbet and Claude Rawson), 1997, pp.951.

The Editor of the Volume III, Professor Norton most precisely sets up the objective of this Volume : "Criticism and crisis are etymological friends ... Renaissance humanism, above all, was responsible for generating a language that would not only reflect the cultural crisis at hand, but base that crisis in its own distinctiveness as a period. The deepest, most central impulses of humanism are thus critical... The critical temper, in its cultural as well as literary dimension, fixes the Renaissance view of time squarely within the

Greek concept of *Arête* as designating a moment both of separation and of decision. The present volume has as its chief aim to register the discourse – the voices and modulations, as it were – of the moment.” (p.1). For planning the present volume the editor adopts the paradigm of “self-fashioning” as the keynote of the Renaissance Culture – a term and notion developed by Stephen Greenblatt in his Chicago book *Renaissance self-fashioning from More to Shakespeare* (1980). For their self-identity Renaissance critics and readers alienated themselves from the earlier unsystematized thinking for concentrating on the varying degrees of changes in literary spheres initiated by the humanist culture that embraced “philosophy of language approaches to reading and interpretation, the crafting of poetics as a tool for describing how texts function, the refinement and expression of literary forms, polemical rivalries, aesthetics, structures of thought, and the postulate that all literary criticism is situational, shaped by its own contextual habitat.” (p.3).

In as many as sixty-one chapters the book covers the principal issues in the continental critical environment during 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The first section deals with reading and interpretation, the second with different aspects of poetics such as humanist classification, rediscovery and transmission of materials, rhetorical poetics and literary genres. The subsequent sections focus on theories of prose fiction, concepts of criticism in metropolitan culture, structures of critical thinking in various disciplines that contribute to literary criticism such as Neoplatonism, cosmography, stoicism, Epicureanism, Calvinism and Jansenism. Different Neoclassical issues such as beauty, judgement persuasion and polemic are discussed at length; and in the concluding section an overall survey of literary criticism in England, France, Italy, Spain and Germany is made. The design of the whole book is encyclopaedic and the editor's skill has taken extra care for not leaving and relevant aspect of the phenomenon he has undertaken one of his reach. His critical vision is large enough to encompass all the basic features of the period he covers and the galaxy of the contributors with their masterly handling of the topics impresses at once the reader for their richness in both information and analysis. It is a matter of great humility and honesty on the part of the author that he has acknowledged the monumental contributions by Bernard Weinberg to Renaissance criticism in his books *A History of Literary Criticism in Italian Renaissance* (Chicago : 1961, 2 vols.) and *Critical Prefaces of the French Renaissance* (Ed. New York : 1950).

The fourth volume on the 18<sup>th</sup> century literary criticism follows a similar encyclopedic design in covering all the major issues of the continental criticism during the period concerned such as literary genres, language and style, multidisciplinary perspectives of literature and literary theory. “The period covered by this volume”, write the editors, “is one in which many changes in literary history can be recorded, not all of which receive the same degree of critical attention or recognition at the time. (Our primary concern is with the history of this critical response, rather than with the primary phenomena, to the limited extent that the two are separable)”. They further observe perceptively that the rise of the novel or prose fiction during this period is responsible for the evolution of a large body of theoretical issues with their initial and vital remarks on the differences between the novel and prose romance. Apart from a vast body of knowledge called aesthetics or philosophical issues of sublime, beauty, taste, judgement – from Baumgarten to Humboldt through Kant, relationship among the various kinds of art verbal, plastic and musical as dealt with by Lessing and Burke, literary genre theories along with critical appreciation of particular genres grew up during this period.

Douglas Patey writes in the introductory chapter that the 18<sup>th</sup> century inherited from the 17<sup>th</sup> century the meaning of criticism as a large area of intellectual activities such as grammar, rhetoric, history, geography and palaeography. Following Kant's concept of “criticism” or “critical philosophy”, criticism functioned as application of reason in any kind of enquiry into any area of knowledge – the “Enlightenment critique” celebrated by Voltaire as the tenth Muse which appeared to rid the world of unreason.

Patey further remarks that eighteenth century criticism provides the very model for writing history of criticism. Critical historians like Saintsbury, Adkins, Wellek, Crane, Cohen and Hohen Dahl have all acknowledged this truth that the 18<sup>th</sup> century criticism provides the foundation for writing history of criticism : “To a remarkable extent, how the history of criticism in any period is written has depended on the historian's understanding of how criticism evolved from the eighteenth century to the nineteenth...” (p.7). It is in this period that the term “literature” takes on something like its modern meaning.

The spectacular success of *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism* in all its four volumes (1, 2, 3, 4) published so far lies both in the sincerity and wide-ranging vision of the respective editor(s) and the in-depth learning of the contributors. The fact that a history of criticism can be written by several hands

under the unitary critical vision of its editor(s) has broken the earlier tradition of writing critical history by a single hand the success of this venture depending largely upon the remarkable improvement in the information systems. Other volumes of this series are eagerly awaited.

***The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism*, Edited by Michael Groden and Martin Kreiswirth, Baltimore, 1994, pp.775.**

The word "criticism" is used in this volume, as it was developed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century referring to discussions about the arts and culture. The entries are as many as 226 by some 200 contributors all experts in their respective areas. The disciplinary boundary is obviously wide and unstable: philosophers, psychologists, psychiatrists, political scholars, linguists all have contributed synoptic accounts and surveys of critical groups, schools and movements with a specific focus on contemporary practice. A distinctive editorial policy of the volume has recommended some thirteen approaches to literary studies : ontological, epistemological, teleological, archeological, descriptive, interpretive, performative, normative, historical, cultural, psychological, appreciative and metacritical (pp.VI-VIII). The Editors write:

The *Guide* is designed in part to assist with the necessary work of stock-taking and consolidation; if it helps to make accessible in clear and concise form a body of material that has become overwhelming, it will have achieved a large task indeed... The *Guide* endeavors to act as an informative, reliable introduction to the principal manifestations of this large and challenging area of inquiry... the *Guide* is decidedly historical in orientation : topics are weighed in terms of their importance in the field of literary studies, as seen from the vantage point today and especially as pursued in North America.... Indexes of names and topics at the end of the volume are helpful for ready reference.

In spite of the utmost care the editors have taken in compiling the *Guide* there have been some inadvertent flaws in some entries. For example, the entry on Indian theory and criticism by Feroza Jussawalla is thoroughly confusing. The author's consideration of Bhartrhari's *Sataka* as a critical text is an absolute bluff. Besides, the treatment of different literary theories of classical India is full of misconceptions and misrepresentations in both their historical and conceptual perspectives. But these cases apart, the *Guide* remains one of the most indispensable tools for the students and advanced scholars in literary and cultural studies.

**Marilyn Jurich, *Scheherazade's Sisters : Trickster Heroines and their Stories in World Literature*, Westport : Greenwood Press, 1998, pp.292.**

The author explores a new type of folktale character, the female trickster, who by trickery saves herself and other women in male-dominated societies where they lose their social identity and safety. Better named *trickstars*, these women expose the hypocrisy and corruption of the male-dominated society. The female trickster is identified and distinguished by male trickster by comparing their differences in functions or performances such as amusement, moral ambiguity, manipulating strategies and reformation of culture and society.

The range of the study is obviously wide in its remarkable multiculturalism of approach and vision. The character is not merely confined to the oral folklore tradition as it draws widely on contemporary feminism, mythology, biblical narratives, and novels, opera and Shakespearean comedy. It is undoubtedly a groundbreaking work that brings to light a narrative type which escaped the sight of literary scholars.

Scheherazade is the central character in the *Arabian Nights* who could be challengingly successful in curing the obsession of the King Shahrayar about infidelity of the whole female gender – an obsession that is drawn only from two cases. Scheherazade's success is due to her extraordinary verbal trick. So she is named as a *trick-star* symbolizing a narrative type overlooked in earlier literary studies. The author most appropriately chooses this character as the prototype of similar ones available in several cultural traditions. The Arabic one is chosen as the prototype since *The Arabian Nights* has been most popular among the folktales since its French translation by J.C. Mardrus and its English rendering by Powys Mathers. It is well known to the lovers of stories how Scheherazade could carry on telling stories for one thousand and one nights to keep the king in good humour so that he would finally discover great narrative skill in a woman destined to reform the misconceptions of a male about the character of the whole of the female gender.

The fundamental issue which stimulates the author for exploring an extraordinarily vast area of verbal art as exhibited in the present work is an ethical one: the age-old male-conception that woman is the archetype of evil, particularly for her verbal trickery. But Jurich questions this conception and demonstrates detouring over the global traditions of oral and written literature, that the conception is a misconception one. A lot of contexts have been discovered with textual evidences that women have been immensely helpful in saving themselves as well as other males and females by their very trickery which has been condemned by the males only baselessly. "To understand what contributes the tricks of women", the author writes, "it is necessary to look at the trick itself... To understand the nature of the trick we have to know the nature of the one who does the tricking. Who is the trickster and what reasons has that individual for using the trick, rather than another means, for accompanying her end? ... Because tricks are so fascinating, they become the basis for stories.... Tricks and women form a natural association; both have been traditionally suspect, regarded with a mixture of suspicion and awe, and both depend on cunning and indirection." (pp.2-3).

Jurich has thus most creatively identified the feminine gender with a literary genre and has most successfully explored a strong argument for the trickery of women that has been immensely helpful in saving humanity and serving social reformation. Chapters 3-5 are full of glaring examples collected from and correlated within the cultural traditions of the whole world. The book is something difficult from the common run of contemporary scholarship. It reasonably displays the author's passion for scholarly pursuits; and she is never satisfied unless she finds every moment of her speculation and imagination is supplied with an evidence. The style itself is narrative as the reader forgets that he is moving around the critical junctures intertwining intricate theoretical issues in feminism, ethics, mythology, literature, folktale, psychology and cultural studies in their widest comparative perspectives.

**Tandra Patnaik, *Sabda : A Study of Bhartrhari's Philosophy of Language*, D.K.Print World (P) Ltd., Delhi, 1994, pp. 178.**

Patnaik views Bhartrhari's ideas on language in modern idiom. According to her, Bhartrhari, the most celebrated Indian writer on language is neither a linguist nor a mystic: he is, in the current idiom, a 'philosopher of language'. Richard Rorty distinguishes between two categories of Philosophy of Language- pure and impure. Frege, Wittgenstein and Carnap, for example, do pure philosophy of language since they deal with "problems about how to systematize our notions of meaning and reference in such a way as to take advantage of quantificational logic, preserve our intuitions about modality, and generally produce a clear and intuitively satisfying picture of the way in which notions like 'truth', 'meaning', 'necessity' and 'name' fit together". On the other hand, impure philosophy of language is explicitly epistemological, i.e., a philosophy such as that of Kant which tends to provide a "permanent a historical framework for inquiry in the form of a theory of knowledge". Donald Davidson and Hilary Putnam have led two different movements by way of attacking the impure philosophy of language. For Davidson, the question "how language works" has no necessary connection with the question "how knowledge works" and Frege and Tarski belong to this group, whereas Russell, Carnap and Quine mingle pure theory of meaning with epistemology. They fostered a "Philosophical Puritanism" which held that the sense data and rules of language are suspicious because they are incapable of being "logically constructed". Now what is the status of Bhartrhari as a philosopher of language?

Patnaik observes that in most of the Indian philosophical systems, the problem of language is a part of epistemology, i.e., *sabda* or language is treated (particularly the language of the Vedas) as testimonial knowledge. But since the Vedic Scriptures await interpretation, authority is sometimes understood in terms of the prescriptive status of the Vedas: they are uncontradictable. But Bhartrhari's approach to language is refreshingly different from the earlier tradition. For the first time he draws our attention to the function of an analyst of language that his concern is not with a fact or object in the outside world, but with only language (or word) that presents the object. In fact, Ferdinand de Saussure's structural linguistics derives from this basic observation of Bhartrhari. Nevertheless, the eight topics he counts under his discussion on language include topics in linguistics particularly the structural aspects of the language which was refined by Panini and was called *Sanskrit* (refined) thenceforward. If Patnaik's own assertion that "Philosophy of language in short, deals with *language*, not *languages*" is accepted and Rorty's concept of "pure Philosophy of language" is taken into consideration, then Bhartrhari cannot stand the criteria of a (pure) Philosopher of language. Since Bhartrhari's observations are based on the structure and function of Sanskrit language, his Philosophy of language

cannot set a universal standard for language in general. But, of course, Bhartrhari's methodology sets a universal standard for studying any language of any time. The comprehensiveness of his approach decries any distinction between the impure and pure categories of philosophy of language as also the distinction between linguistics and Philosophy of language.

Mrs. Patnaik has obviously not worked along the line of Rorty's investigations, and she has rightly not done so. The notable merit of her work lies in highlighting different aspects of Bhartrhari's ideas in comparison with different Western philosophers addressing similar issues in their writings. Wittgenstein is juxtaposed with Bhartrhari's concepts of understanding, communication and limits of sayability; Searle and Austin with communication; Frege and Davidson with thought, truth and language. Although these piecemeal comparisons in cross-cultural examination does not build up a system for Bhartrhari's own reflections on language, the comparisons themselves reflect the author's in-depth analysis and sincere understanding of the philosophers she has undertaken for her project. And in this respect she has advanced the Bhartrhari studies in India beyond her predecessors like Ayer and Sastri. In my view she has never been superficial, and is therefore fully aware of her power and limits in dealing with so important a thinker of ancient India who was considered a divine being (Bhagavan) by the posterity and was immensely influential for various schools of thought such as linguistics, metaphysics, poetics and mysticism in later intellectual tradition of India, since, according to him, any discussion on language is inevitably connected with the structure of the language in question and with the cognition of the people who use it. In writing this book, Mrs. Patnaik has rendered a valuable service to the scholars who work in multidisciplinary areas of knowledge.

**Srikanta Mohanty, *The Other Boundary of Language*, Bhubaneswar: Elite**

**Publications, 1995, pp 275.**

Mohanty understands language in an extended sense – as a medium of both experience and expression. He believes further that our experience of all the art forms – visual, auditory, verbal and audiovisual – has a common linguistic function that can be called "aesthetic realisation" or *rasanubhuti* in Sanskrit. This means that experience of art in general is virtually a *rasa* experience and this *rasa* experience is the other boundary of the linguistic experience. This central argument of the author conforms to the ideas of Bhartrhari (7<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.) the doyen of classical Indian philosophy of language. But in explication of the philosophical function of language, the author considers only a limited group of philosophers, particularly the linguistic analysts who differentiated poetic language from the language of philosophical analysis. According to them language of poetry is only a pseudo statement (or meaningless) or metaphorical whereas the language of philosophy is verifiable empirical statements. Instead, the author insists that even along the lines of arguments of the analytic philosophers, imagistic language of poetry can be interpreted as "meaningful" – and not merely pseudo statements. In other words, poetic imagery is as meaningful as is a philosophical proposition.

In the first chapter the author offers a general account of the analyst view of language, and in the subsequent two chapters he analyses logical structure of poetic imagery. He is bold enough to reject the authority of Ayer's view that poetic propositions are literally meaningless. According to the author, propositions of science or philosophy cannot be distinguished from those of poetry only on the basis of empirical truth value. Instead, the difference lies on their difference in logical structure: When scientific and philosophical propositions are intended to state or imply (empirical) reality, poetic propositions neither state nor imply this reality. An imagery is non-intellectual, gets transformed to result in an unmediated aesthetic realisation.

The most attractive part of Mohanty's book is the application of his ideas (in their explanation and illustration) to Oriya poetry. But the ideas themselves need accuracy and sophistication in the light of a huge mass of current scholarship on the subject. Particularly his explanation of the structure of imagery is only too insufficient to attract any scholarly attention. Besides, his understanding of the Sanskrit poetics is extremely haphazard. For example, the English word "metaphor" is generally used for the Sanskrit *laksana*. But whereas all the figures of speech are counted under *laksana*, *rupaka* means metaphor and *upama* simile. According to the Alankara School of Sanskrit poetics, poetic propositions basically express our experience of reality in terms of subject-analogue relationship; and the varieties of this relationship determines the varieties of figures of speech counted under two major divisions – resemblance and contrast. Simile, for example is a flat comparison between subject and analogue; metaphor is an identification of subject with

analogue; symbol is an analogue standing for the subject. Imagery is genus and figures of speech species. Ideal poetic expression is always imagistic, but all images are not figures of speech, whereas all figures of speech are images. *Dhvani* is basically an image or a pattern of imagery, though not necessarily a figurative expression. In fact *dhvani* theorists rejected the figures of speech (metaphor in general) as neither necessary nor sufficient for an ideal poetic expression. *Dhvani* is a meaning by revelation.

However, what looks genuine in the book is the author's awareness of the vast boundary of the subject matter he undertakes for an examination. But what he lacks is the proper grasp of this boundary which is much vaster than what he thinks to be. Any discussion on metaphor requires an acquaintance with Max Black's seminal essay and the huge mass of subsequent commentaries. Another basic error he commits is the idea that we experience all the forms of artworks in terms of a common language which might be called *rasa/ rasanubhuti*. Abhinavagupta and the Indian aesthetic tradition have concluded that *rasa* is experienced only in two art forms – the theatre and literature, in witnessing a dramatic performance and reading forms of poetry. Experience of painting and music does not generate *rasa*. It seems the Epilogue does not just suit the book in its failing to keep up any coherence and appropriate correlation of the concepts and theories taken up. The book thus should be thoroughly revised in its second edition, particularly concentrating more on the systematic expression and application of Western part eliminating whole of the Sanskrit part in its comparative perspectives, because the author seems to be better acquainted with the analytic tradition than with the traditional Sanskrit poetics.

**Rajnish Kumar Mishra, *Buddhist Theory of Meaning and Literary Analysis*, Delhi : D.K.Printworld (P) Ltd., 1999, PP.XX + 292.**

The author writes: "Buddhist theory of meaning has a distinct place in this world of competing theories. The well-defined theory of meaning it offers has become very popular among the Indian intellectuals who are enthusiastic about carrying out comparative studies of *apoha* and the Saussurean linguistics in general and deconstruction of Jacques Derrida in particular. But such studies have not much headway. A truly scholarly research in this area is still awaited.... The present study examines literary language as evidence of the poet's experience in a social context and as such captures the multivalent reality – be it of the text or of the context, social or historical, or of the relationship between the two". To put it precisely, the writer elaborates upon the Buddhist *apoha* theory of meaning, as far as possible, in the current critical idiom, and has applied this theory of meaning in interpreting literary texts – as an explaining model- Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey".

The writer's view, that the relevance of the classical theories should not be assessed by the fact that they are revived by the moderns, is certainly a considerable one. But did Jayanta Bhatta not say – "wherefrom new things are born?" Eliot similarly points out that in order that any discourse be considered great and valuable it must fulfil the demand of each and every generation. What the author wants to say is this that particularly in the Indian context scholars (even so reputed as Harold Coward) have always assessed the universality and originality of classical Indian thought by juxtaposing it with the Western ideas and theories. This has been the essential feature of colonial discourse. One of the most disappointing result of this feature is the rejection of Sanskrit *Dhvani* theory by one of the most eminent Sanskrit scholars of our time Professor V.K.Chari. The present author rightly comments that the value of the Buddhist *apoha* theory of meaning should not be judged by its relevance for understanding or matching the theories forwarded by the contemporary Western critics – may be Saussure or Derrida. It is absolutely agreeable that any idea in any cultural context is always autonomous. The comparative literature discipline of our days falls a victim to an overemphasis on theoretical analyses. The interpretive side is rather unreasonably neglected. Following the Western structuralist model of linguistic, stylistic analysis of a literary work, the author has attempted commendably at analysing an important English poem by applying the Buddhist theory of meaning and discourse analysis. He is thorough with the Sanskrit texts he has handled. But a fundamental question seems to remain unanswered: are the Buddhist linguistics and epistemology peculiarly suitable for analysing Wordsworth's poem (s) only because his definition of poetry as emotion recollected in tranquillity is peculiarly a Buddhist idea? Or are they qualified for being applied to analyse any kind of literary discourse? Another point: in spite of the author's great enthusiasm for working out his analyses with tabular details, the reader of the text feels discomforted by the incoherent presentation of the theoretical ideas. He has been successful in excavating the ideas, but has failed to put them up in a critical order with necessary precision and felicity of style.

**P.L.Bhargava, *Retrieval of History from Puranic Myths*, Delhi : D.K.Printworld (P) Ltd., Enlarged Edition 1998, PP, 146.**

The major question that concerns the subject is : can history be retrieved from myths ? Historical and mythical discourses belong to two different categories : myth is anti/ante-historical; historical discourse is always ascribed to personal authors whereas mythical discourse is impersonal. It reflects the collective unconscious of a culture. In Aristotle's language, myth is more philosophical than history, since history records individual events and characters chronologically whereas myth presents the archetypes that transcend chronology.

In the Indian tradition, *puranas* are elaborations of the Vedic scriptures. In doing so *puranas* are virtually impersonal although they are ascribed to an individual author Vyasa who has no historical identity. Under such theoretical and factual circumstances the question of tracing history in mythology is absolutely an illegitimate attitude, that too when the researcher rejects myths by the criterion that they are unhistorical – not only ahistorical.

The mythical events and characters which Bhargava has questioned from historical perspectives are : Rama's banishment of Sita, Rama's killing Bali surreptitiously, Visvamitra's fatherhood of Sakuntala, Parsurama's matricide, Bhaguratha's bringing the river Ganges from the heaven, Krisna's love affair with Radha, Yudhisthira's crowning Hastinapura in 3102 B.C., Vyasa's authorship of eighteen *puranas* and several sub-*puranas* and Valmiki's robberhood in his earlier life. It is really surprising that an eminent historian like Bhargava should dabble in such questions, a lot of labour thus ending in futility. The most disastrous result of Bhargava's futile quest appears in his study of Visvamitra myth when he writes : "The anecdote of his dalliance with Menaka is a mendacious myth that has undeservedly clouded his spiritual greatness". (P.39) By a single stroke Bhargava wipes out the most glorious literary piece of Kalidasa from the history of Sanskrit plays. Another pitiable statement is "It is a pity that the *Puranas* and the *Mahabharata* have given divergent accounts of Jahnvi's ancestors" (P.37). The reviewer's normal response is it is a pity that Bhargava does not know the simplest truth that myths *must differ* in different sources. This very difference in the versions of a myth is the sign of the organic growth of a cultural imagination. Following his own (mis-)criteria he would commit the greatest of the critical blunder in rejecting Aeschylus' final resolution of the chain of nemesis bringing in the event of divine forgiveness for Orestes to redeem him of matricide. His noble ventures for searching "bases" and consistency in the several versions of a single myth turn out to be ignoble finally. What are the "bases" for a myth other than the collective imagination of a culture ? What does constitute the pattern of a myth other than the different versions of the same myth in different sources ? Bhargava has hopelessly confused myth with history and the worst critical crime he has committed is assessing the cultural values of myth by historical criteria.

**S.M.S. Chari, *Philosophy and Theistic Mysticism of the Alvars*, Delhi : Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1997, PP.263.**

During a time when Kaula Tantra was dominating the whole of eastern India (5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> c. A.D.) south India was raising the cult of Vaisnavism under the reign of Pallava, Pandya and Chola kings. It was approximately during this time or a bit earlier that the *Bhagavatapurana* was composed. Twelve Tamil saints who contributed to the origin of south Indian Vaisnavism are called *Alvars* a term in Tamil which means "one who has deeply immersed in God's experience". Thus the cult was more a phenomenological than a speculative system of religious movement when mysticism dominated over philosophy, and therefore, was greatly responsible for the dualist, nondualist and qualified monistic systems of the Vedanta school (that developed during 10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries). Vilvamangala, Jayadeva and Sridharaswami (the pioneer commentator on the *Bhagavatapurana*-14<sup>th</sup> A.D.) are the great spiritual heirs of these Alvars, apart from the saint-philosophers like Yamuna and Ramanuja. The whole history of these saints is one of the most glorious events of Indian culture. There is no language to estimate the invaluable contributions of these saints to human culture as a whole. Apart from the original writings by these saints called "prabandham", there had been several studies by scholars like Govindacharya, Hooper, Varadachari and Subba Reddiar. But the present work by Chari is a distinguished one for its systematic dealing with all the major aspects of the area of knowledge. In the eight chapters of the book the topics dealt with are : life and works of Alvars, the doctrines of ultimate reality, God, individual self, *sadhana*, supreme goal, theistic mysticism ending with a general



evaluation of the whole system in its concluding 8<sup>th</sup> chapter. A glossary is very helpful for understanding the technical Tamil and Sanskrit terms along with a bibliography of original source texts, commentaries, related texts and secondary research studies.

The analysis in the present book is uniquely transparent because of the author's own religious involvement with the cult as a sincere practitioner. "The teachings of the Alvars are not basically different from what is said in the Vedas, the Epics and the Agamas. Their uniqueness, however, lies in the fact that they are presented for the first time to the common people in their spoken language (Tamil)." The book is undoubtedly an excellent guide to the scholars who work on both philosophy and religious practices of Vaisnavism as a whole.

**R.C.Pradhan, *Philosophy of Meaning and Representation*, Delhi: D.K.Printworld (p) Ltd, 1996, pp.203.**

The author proposes a representational theory of meaning founding his studies on the philosophy of Wittgenstein, Frege, Davidson and Dummett. The non-representational theory of language has been provided by the theorists like Heidegger, Derrida and Rorty who have rejected the classical theory of meaning and truth. The present book "addresses itself to that question and tries to argue that the notion of representation is a pre-theoretical notion and so it is independent of the debate between the realists and anti-realists over whether truth and meaning can be classically understood. I have argued that the choice is not between language as *representation* and language as *play or game* in the later Wittgensteinian sense, but whether we can think of language that is not about the world at all. So the basic presupposition of semantics is that language is involved in the world. This I call representational relation between language and the world". (pp.IX-X). In the six chapters of the book the author deals with his subject most systematically. He starts with the point that the relation between language and the world is founded upon the Fregean concept of sense that promotes the semantics of representations. Next he studies Frege's theory of representation demonstrating the logical relation between language and the world. Truth is a disclosure concept – a fundamental notion that discloses the structure of the world by disclosing the structure of the language. Meaning and representation are internally linked as both of them are representation – both meaning and truth are co-present in the dynamism of the linguistic representation since language is basically about the world." In the final chapter the author argues against Quine's naturalism on the basic observation that there are facts of the matter in semantics that cannot be reduced to natural facts.

The nature of linguistic representation, as it is presented in this book, is not pictorial since the relation between meaning and the world is logical rather than factual. Language logically represents the world means that the logical structure of both language and the world is the same. But could Tarski's and Davidson's proposal that we think of truth in language, not as a conceptual framework or correspondence to something presented be a step forward – beyond the time of world as "picture" or pictured? Could language be a constative representation without being at the same time a step back to metaphysics? Could there be representation as the performance enacted in *Philosophical Investigations* without being representation as the propositions of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*? The theatrical representation being the paradigm of this enactment- representation, what the recent aestheticians have called a re-presentation, an attack on Platonic mimesis – forms an interesting aspect of contemporary scholarship on the multidisciplinary issue of representation in language and different forms of art. Dr. Pradhan is not perhaps aware of such issues. He might be interested in reading a galaxy of ideas on this attractive area of correlation in my forthcoming book *Art and Representation* with Greenwood Publishing Group Inc.

**A.C. Sukla**

**Grazia Marchiano (Ed.), *East and West in Aesthetics*, Roma : Institut Editoriali E Poligrafici Internazionali, 1997, pp.200**

Professor Marchiano, the founder of the Lotus and the Rose Group of Studies in comparative aesthetics in the University of Siena (Italy) has been consistently pursuing her mission for building up a body of aesthetic principles, norms and theories on the ground and belief in an intercultural intellectual unification. Italian sensibility has been a protean direction in formulation of contemporary aesthetic ideas developing eminent centres in Bologna, Rome, Milano and Turin. Apart from the migrated Italian scholars like Umberto Eco and Gianni Vattimo, native scholars like Stephano Zecci and Grazia Marchiano have been

extremely enthusiastic in promoting Italian aesthetic sensibility in conformity with the glorious Roman intellectual heritage. Marchiano's strong conviction for structuring an international body of aesthetics is reflected in the present work. She collects papers from different scholars who are actively engaged in developing aesthetic ideals foregrounding their own national cultures. Mentions may be made of Professors Imamichi and Sukla who are responsible for disseminating and popularising aesthetics in their own countries (Japan and India respectively) through the periodicals on aesthetics they edit. There are representative scholars from Finland, Venezuela, Belgium, U.S.A and Romania along with the scholars from Japan and India.

In the introductory remarks Marchiano pleads for the validity of comparative aesthetics by reference to Larson and Deutsch versus Dayakrishna and Panikkar. The first group of philosophers being optimist for comparative philosophy, the second group is sceptic. Whereas Panikkar rejects comparative philosophy altogether as a contradiction in terms (a thing cannot be philosophy and comparative simultaneously), Dayakrishna thinks that "the so-called comparative studies" of philosophy is nothing but reporting of data in terms of Western conceptual framework. Dayakrishna's apprehension of the dominance of the Western conceptual framework almost in all our contemporary intellectual activities is only self-evident. But this apprehension has been speedily outdated, particularly in the present context of reactions against colonialist discourses. The essays collected by Marchiano do not show any dominance of the Western conceptual framework. Each author has spoken on the issues that concern his own critical tradition. Consider, for example, Sukla's paper on *Dhvani*. Whereas Professor V.K. Chari has rejected the universality of *Dhvani* theory put into the Wittgensteinian framework, and consequently has rejected the most vital theory of Sanskrit literary aesthetics, Sukla has presented the theory entirely in its home-tradition without mentioning any of the Western critics/theories which could accommodate or reject this theory. Reversely, the ontological issue which the *Dhvani* theory raises (in Sukla's demonstration) compel a Western critic for rethinking the theories of literary meaning his tradition has forwarded so far. Thus, in the context of the present anthology, the comparative nature of Sukla's paper does not follow any established Western conceptual framework; yet it is essentially comparative. Marchiano significantly quotes Keji Nishitani : "to say that each thing is an absolute centre means that wherever a thing is, the world worlds. And this in turn, means that each thing, by being in its home-ground is in the home-ground of all, each is in its own home-ground" (p-11). This is a crucial statement for justifying the mode and validity of all comparative activities in our intellectual world across the national boundaries.

Juxtaposing Sukla with Hashimoto's paper "The Semantic Transformation of an Axiological Concept" generates an excellent comparison of the Japanese concept of *Ma* and the Sanskrit concept of *Vyanjana* and *Dhvani*. If *Ma* is a transformation of potentiality into actuality, in Sanskrit *Dhvani* (actuality) is a transformation of *Vyanjana* (linguistic potentiality). The Sanskrit philosophers did not hold language as purely a phenomenon of use. Like every phenomenon language has its own potency and it operates by unfolding this potency – it is language which speaks not man, as Heidegger puts it.

Marchiano's own paper along with that of Professor Imamichi is highly original and provokes the reader's imagination for rethinking the things known so far. Dethier's essay on Hegel's thinking on the East, Mitias' paper on the semantics of architecture are all rich in ideas, information, analysis and assessment. Professor Marchiano's anthology is a landmark in the contemporary scholarship on comparative aesthetics.

K.C.Dash  
Sri Jagannath Sanskrit  
University, Puri (Orissa)

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